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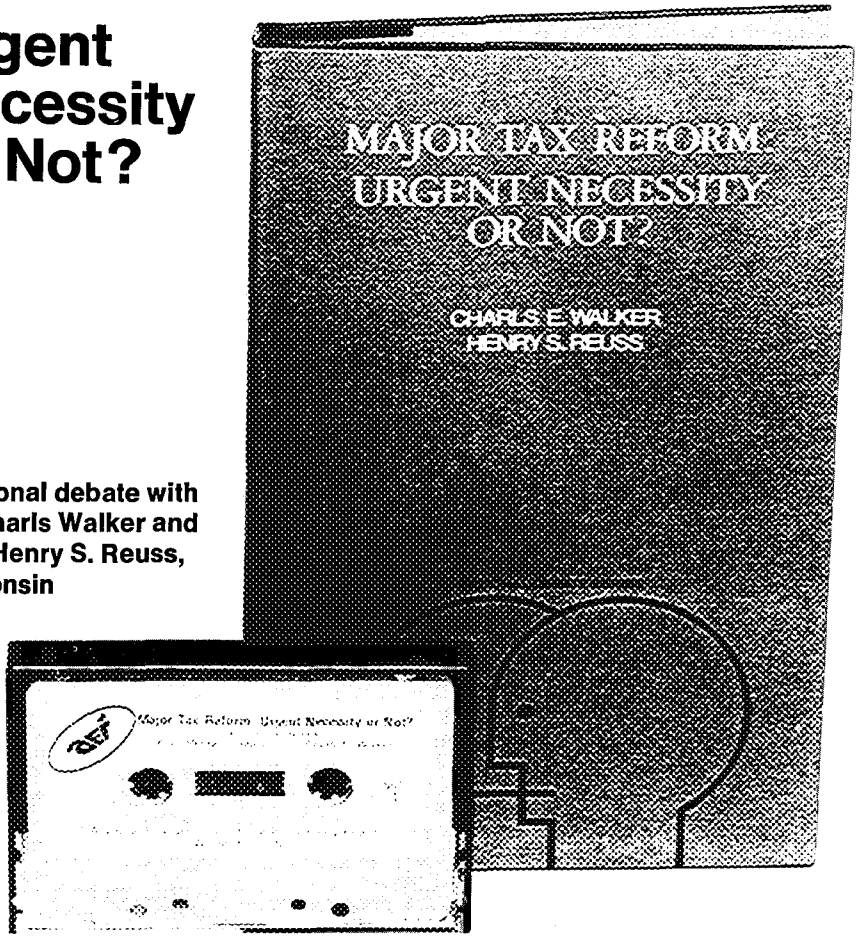

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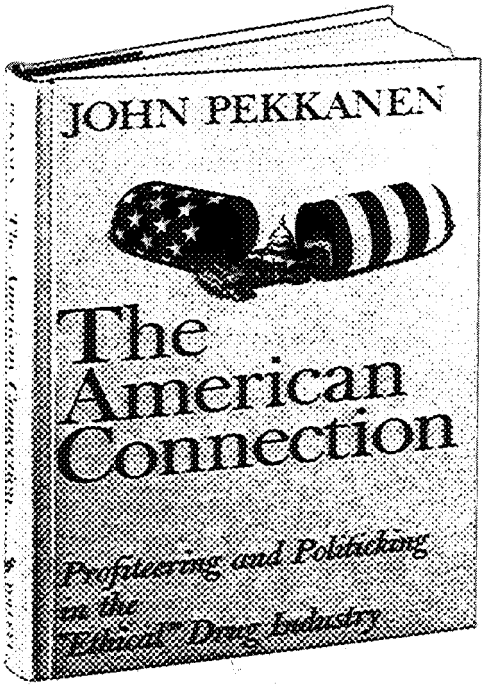

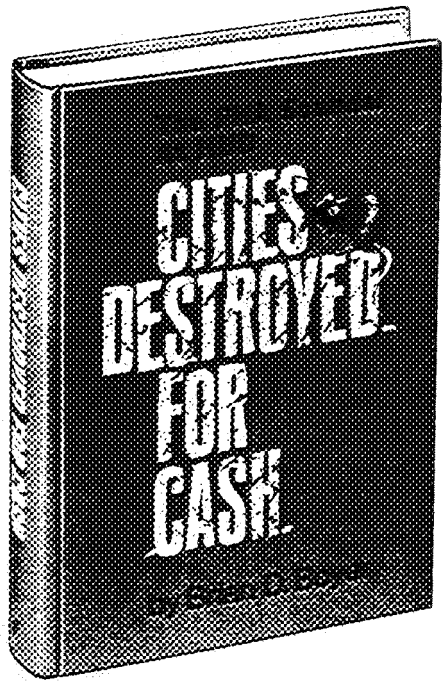

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MEANWHILE THE REALITIES

Student Loans: How the Government Takes the Work Out of Fraud

by Sylvia Kronstadt

Like many young women from poverty backgrounds, Ramona Gavilan is a waitress. But the reason this 21-year-old South Bronx resident is waiting tables 14 hours a day is somewhat different—she owes the federal government $1,500. She wasn't caught cheating on her taxes and she hasn't jumped bail. Ramona just made the mistake of succumbing to the blandishments of a phony vocational-school course in computer programming.

Even more disquieting is the government's role in Ramona's predicament. Like 1.3 million other young people last year, Ramona took out a Federally Insured Student Loan (FISL) to help finance her post-secondary education. Since the program began in 1965 a total of $6 billion has been loaned to 6.1 million students. To Ramona it sounded like just the thing: the loans, originally intended to reduce the burden on families sending children to four-year colleges, have been expanded to cover vocational training schools as well. Night school and correspondence courses may offer their students the only hope of escaping low-paying and menial jobs, of attaining some independence and professional respect. On paper the FISL looked like the open door to a promising future for hundreds of thousands searching for a career.

Instead, the program has become a parody of the way to tackle a social problem, an exercise so grotesquely

Sylvia Kronstadt formerly worked with New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs. She is currently involved in prison reform.

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managed as to suggest a guiding genius of black humor. Because the government turned on the money without watching where it was going, roving packs of charlatans and con men moved in to fill the gaps in the educational system. Not only are these hustlers tolerated as they grow fat at their victims' expense, but they are actually abetted by government policy. The secret of their success is the knowledge that the federal government will bail them out when they need help, serving as the collection agency of last resort. No student of government can be surprised at failure or misdirection, but rarely is there such a federal theater of the absurd, in which government has become one of the actors.

Since its passage in 1965 the student loan program has generally stayed out of the headlines. During periods of tight money there has been some outcry that the FISLs were available only to students whose parents were regular bank customers. But what public attention the program has received has been triggered by its rising level of defaults—currently $55.2 million. Not surprisingly, this high default rate has been blamed on that much maligned, but rapidly vanishing species, the student radical. Brief newspaper articles noting another quarterly rise in the default rate conjure up visions of Vermont communes where not repaying student loans has the kind of prestige value once reserved for resisting the draft.

It turns out that this accusation contains about as much truth as the charge of just a few years ago that the activities of anti-war students were hardening North Vietnam's resolve to fight. The high default rate has surprisingly little to do with dropping out of the system but reveals a lot about the perils of living under its thumb. In 1971 only 10 per cent of the FISLs went to students enrolled in vocational schools, but these trade schools accounted for more than 70 of the defaults in one part of the program. About half the defaults since 1965 have been for vocational students.

What this default rate provides is a pretty fair gauge of the actual market value of many vocational courses. Although a correspondence course in radio announcing can be as useless as a television set whose picture tube fades long before the payments are up, the collection process is rather different in each case. The owner of the faulty television set may be dragged into court or harassed by early morning calls from a collection agency, but students who have been fleeced by a vocational school discover that they are dealing with an agency far more powerful than a mere bill collector. While they may have been bilked by a shady vocational school, the students may end up in debt directly to the federal government. And Uncle Sam intends to collect.

Earn Big Money!

"Join the new and glamorous world of computers—establish a secure position in this nerve center of the future!" a TV commercial had urged Ramona Gavilan right after she graduated from high school. "In just a few short months we will prepare you for a profession with prestige, responsibility, and high pay. Call us now—and arrange for a confidential interview!"

Exhilarated by the prospect of a "Real job that could give me respect," the soft-spoken young woman called the school and agreed to permit a sales representative—or "admissions counselor," as he was characterized—to come to her home. Ninety minutes after his arrival Ramona had signed a nine-month training contract, which was co-signed by her Spanish-speaking aunt. She also signed a student loan agreement that enabled the school to receive payment in full immediately from a bank, thus beginning Ramona's chain of indebtedness.

"The salesman told me I had a 'high aptitude' for computers," she recalls. "And he said there was so much need for programmers that

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The Dance of Legislation

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employers would 'stand in line' to hire me when I graduated—starting at $12,000 to $15,000 a year. I was so happy." Ramona felt sure that the school was legitimate, partly because "if they're approved for federal aid, they must be good."

"The course was very terrible," she remembers. "There were too many in the class, and the teachers just read to us from the textbook all day. Over half the class dropped out and lost most of their money. But I really did try, and I graduated."

Needless to say, there were few corporate recruiters at Ramona's graduation. The school sent her to two interviews—one company wanted only college graduates, the other demanded two years experience.

After four dismal months pounding the pavement on her own, Ramona discovered that "there were no jobs anywhere. One man said he would hire me as a clerk-typist. That's what I was doing before I went to the school! When I started getting bills for the loan, I didn't pay any attention. Now the *government* is saying pay *us* $1,500. Forget it."

But according to the U. S. Office of Education's Division of Insured Loans, the government has neither the intention—nor the authority—to forget or "forgive" a defaulted student loan obligation.

"We can't be held responsible for what the salesman said or how good the course is—these things are school matters," says Jeffery Rathensburger of the Division's staff. "Our obligation to the taxpayers is to collect in full on every loan."

Booming Opportunities!

Even more compelling is the case of a 19-year-old black grocery checker from Newark who managed to complete only five lessons of a drafting course which he had been assured would be "simple." But because he never formally disenrolled from the course, he was liable for all of his

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$1,000 student loan. In a courtroom the drafting school might have a hard time proving its case against him. Yet under the terms of the FISL, this 19-year-old youth, and many thousands like him, are cast in the role of fugitives from justice. The schools are happy—they received their money long ago from the federal government, leaving the hapless students to make their excuses to a federal collection office, whose only interest is getting the money back.

No doubt this scenario is not what the designers of the FISL program had in mind when they approved use of the loans for vocational schools. What has gone wrong with the program since it was approved with such fanfare back in 1965?

The FISL program, described by one of its federal administrators as "the government aid program that touches more lives than any other except Social Security," was made possible by the Higher Education Act of 1965. It permits "eligible students"—those with adjusted family incomes of under $15,000—to obtain interest-free loans of up to $1,500 per year from some 20,000 participating banking institutions, if they enroll in one of the 8,000 "eligible" schools, either nonprofit or profit-making ("proprietary"). Because of inflation, legislation was passed in 1972 to increase the loan maximum to $2,500 a year.

As long as the student remains in school, and for up to a year's grace period after the end of his studies, the government pays interest on the loan to the original lender, usually a bank. The student then has up to 10 years to repay the loan at an annual interest rate of only seven per cent.

The original FISL concept was to provide loans only to college and university students. But vigorous lobbying by private, profit-making vocational and correspondence schools quickly led to the passage of the National Vocational Act of 1965. This law, whose administration was later consolidated with that of the Higher Education Act, authorized identical loan programs for students enrolled in proprietary institutions.

The results should have been predictable. The program had its own Equity Fund scandal as a college in Wisconsin wrote up loans for nonexistent students in exchange for kickbacks from a California lending institution. But the real benefits were reaped by profit-making institutions. Correspondence schools, for example, have increased their loan volume by 2,000 per cent in three years. And proprietary-school students have meanwhile compiled a default rate 20 times higher than their collegiate counterparts.

Why do these students default? Remarkably, there have been few attempts to study the problem. Many authorities contend that the grossly disproportionate default rate among vocational and correspondence students exists because they are stunned, hurt, and angry at the broken promises of the schools. "How else can they retaliate?" asks a Federal Trade Commission attorney.

Let Uncle Sam Do the Dirty Work!

Proprietary trade, technical, and correspondence schools continue to grow and proliferate to fill the gap in America's educational system—a system which, outgoing Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland has noted, sends 2.5 million young people yearly into the labor force without marketable skills. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Americans, most of them young and many of them poor, enroll in these schools, which too often present themselves as the cushioned and direct pipeline to the American Dream. Their messages of hope—transmitted by every mass medium from television to girlie magazines to matchbooks—are directed at those who lack the money, academic credentials, or desire to attend college, and who are either unemployed or locked into dead-end jobs.

The schools offer training in hun-

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dreds of subjects—everything from cash register operating to meat cutting, beauty culture to dental technology, insurance adjusting to electrical appliance repair. Their ads portray well-dressed young people striding authoritatively through gleaming laboratories and executive suites, reading radio news bulletins with modulated urgency, skillfully thrusting the gears of "the big rigs," or appraising the rhythmic blinking of obedient computers.

Although many proprietary schools have provided enlightened, innovative, and solid vocational training, the industry as a whole has been so full of hucksters and overblown promises that Senator Walter Mondale has called it "the last legalized con game in America."

The FISL office receives "about half a dozen complaint letters a day—virtually all regarding vocational schools," according to a staff member. Their contents are fairly standard: the advertising was misleading, the salesman lied, the training was inadequate, graduates can't get jobs. Consumer protection agencies receive additional thousands of complaints each year—enough to persuade them that the "career industry" should be a top priority for reform. Yet because of the vast amounts of quick capital that the loan program has made available, the proprietary school business has been transformed into one of the newest entrepreneurial gold mines, a sought-after acquisition for conglomerates like ITT, Bell and Howell, Control Data, and RCA, whose only interest in education is its profitability. A new breed of proprietary school has evolved—schools at which nearly every student, and thus the school itself, is dependent upon government aid. Eligibility for federal largesse is virtually a competitive necessity, according to many school proprietors.

"Dramatic enrollment increases" at many schools is often accompanied by a "deterioration in admissions standards," according to David Bayer, Associate FISL Director. Some schools, for example, have been accused of watering down their courses in order to retain students for longer periods and thereby to collect more tuition. Tuition at these proprietary schools has been rising as well. Why not? With the government providing the money and the student envisioning a "rewarding new career," it seems to make scant difference whether the loan is for $1,500 or $2,500. The Milwaukee-based Career Academy, for example, has sent out form letters to prospective students noting the availability of government loans and emphasizing that "you don't have to begin paying it back until you are in an exciting, high-paying position which we will help you find."

Another reason the amount of tuition doesn't seem to matter to the students is that very few of them realize what they're getting into when they sign the loan agreement. Rarely spelled out is the way the FISL repayment plan bridges the gap between business and government by aping some of the marketplace's most loathesome practices—in this case, the "holder in due course" doctrine.

This concept is the legal doctrine that prevents fraud, deceit, or abuse by one party in a business deal from inhibiting other parties' ability to collect the money originally bargained

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for. Until the government got into the guaranteed-loan business, this doctrine had mainly been of use to encyclopedia salesmen, sharpies of all sorts, and touts in shiny suits. Its standard form is when a crooked jeweler sells you a piece of glass on the time payment plan. By the time you discover it's not the standard diamond wedding ring, the jeweler has sold your payment contract to a bank, which becomes the "holder in due course" of your obligation. You can complain all you want about the jeweler, even take him to court if you happen to have a lawyer and a lot of free time and if the jeweler hasn't skipped town, but you still owe the money to the bank and have to pay up.

To use a more pertinent example, if you get a federal loan to go to a vocational school and then find that the school's promises were a hoax, this has no effect on your obligation to repay the loan. When a student fails to keep up his loan payments, the lender (usually a bank) turns the account over to the FISL office. The government pays off the bank and goes to work on the student. Holder in due course not only destroys the student's only real bargaining tool—not paying tuition—to make sure the school lives up to its promises, but also turns the government into the most unprincipled sort of collection agency for proprietary schools. The schools no longer have to sue non-paying students—a practice that was "always bad PR and costly, too," one school director admits. Now, the cost and the accompanying ill will are passed on to the federal government, where collection work—originally seen as a minor part of the FISL program—has become its overriding task. In early 1972, for example, Congress appropriated $12.8 million to cover the defaulted loans and to pay salaries for an additional 58 collection officers.

The FISL's grasp of the entire situation and its compassion for the students involved comes through in statements like this one from Assistant FISL Director Bayer: "If the student has a case against the school, he should seek redress from the school—in court, if necessary." This is just the kind of advice the student needs. Out of work and hounded by the government, he should go hire a lawyer, wait six months for the courts to do their work, and hope that at the end he won't be $5,000 farther in debt if he loses the case.

Thus the government maintains that a student is without defenses—no "causes of action" that are relevant to his loan obligation. "The only way you can get out of it is to die—or suffer total, irreversible injury," says Jeffrey Rathensburger. Even a student's assertion of bankruptcy is not viewed as an "out." "He may have nothing now, but in 20 years he may have something, and we'll get it," Rathensburger predicts confidently.

The government has no standard collection procedure; each debt is handled individually. Many students break down and agree to make payments as soon as they discover that the loan is in the hands of the federal government and they begin receiving stern letters regarding their "debt to the U. S. Treasury."

We Always Win!

"I thought I was going to become hysterical," recalls Dominican immigrant Eladio Romero. "I always want to be a good citizen, pay my taxes, obey the law. For a year I told them I wouldn't pay but when the government got into the act, I can't hold out. So, I'm paying—paying for nothing."

Romero, who enrolled in a course entitled "Investment Banking" from the Career Academy, one of the most aggressive beneficiaries of the loan program, alleges that "everything the salesman told me was a lie except for the price and the starting date." Even the title was fishy. Halfway through the course, it was changed to "Investment Operations."

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"I found out we would be back-office clerks instead of investment executives, but they still said I'd make 'many times' my present pay of $150 a week as a printer, so I stuck it out," Romero recalls. "When I graduated they finally agreed to 'seek a trainee position' for me at $110 a week. I said 'man, are you crazy? I've got five children.' "

If a student-borrower fails to crumble at the prospect of a battle with Uncle Sam, the Division has a variety of auxiliary strategies and may call the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or even the Social Security office into the fray.

Government collection agents may visit the ex-student's employer and inform him of his employee's "just obligation," according to Rathensburger. "Most people don't want to employ a debtor," he says flatly. The defaulting student can also be "blacklisted" with the State Department, making it impossible for him to obtain a passport or visa. He can be banned from employment in any government or government-subsidized job and can be prevented from obtaining a security clearance, bank loan, or insurance policy.

Although parents of students are under no legal obligation to pay off their offspring's defaulted loans, "about half the debts are being paid by parents who can't stand the thought of their kids in trouble with the government," explains Rathensburger. If the debt is reported to the Department of Justice, it can create a lien against the student's assets or earnings. Legal action is usually taken only as a last resort, and "we always win," a loan director boasts.

Would there be so many defaults if the schools knew they might have to prove their good faith in court if they wanted to collect from the students? Probably not, because guaranteed payments are an almost certain way to lower the quality of a service.

The abuses of the student loan program closely parallel what happened after Congress approved the 1968 Housing Act designed to make mortgages—and thereby home ownership—readily available to the poor. Once mortgage bankers discovered that the government would reimburse them if a homeowner defaulted on his mortgage, events were set in motion that led to the worst housing scandal in our history. Suddenly there was no longer any need to worry about the condition of the home being purchased or the financial resources of the borrower. If anything went wrong, there was the federal government waiting to take the lender off the hook. The resulting rash of foreclosures left the federal government owning blocks of gutted ghetto tenements. What was really at fault in both this case and with the student loan program was the loss of accountability which seems to invariably accompany such federally guaranteed loans.

It's a Piece of Cake!

To be eligible for the FISL program, the student receiving the loan must attend an "eligible school." In any instance where a "government recognized" accrediting agency exists for the type of school involved, accreditation by that agency amounts to eligibility. Interestingly enough, proprietary schools themselves were not very interested in accreditation until they realized that they could benefit from student aid legislation. Existing trade associations for vocational schools decided to create purportedly independent "accrediting commissions," and thereby qualify for recognition by the Office of Education.

A number of schools have been so anxious to get what one school director termed "a big piece of the cake" that they have, in violation of federal regulations, paid or in other ways "made it attractive" to lending institutions to make loans to their students. Others have hired money brokers to locate a source willing to make the loans, or to provide the school itself with sufficient capital to make the

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loans. Student loan "portfolios" have even been used as a kind of speculative currency, to be bought and sold until, as a California state banking official phrased it, "the student has no idea who the hell he owes money to."

Banks, too, have been parties in such illegal transactions, according to the Office of Education. But banks have devised their own methods for turning the program to their advantage. Many require that the student open an account with them, and a 1971 American Bankers' Association study indicated that 90 per cent of the loans were being made to the banks' own depositors. Most important is the role played by the banks in the default problem. In some situations a default is financially more attractive to the bank, since it can obtain immediate reimbursement from the government instead of waiting through a lengthy repayment period. Many school officials allege that banks often make no bona fide collection attempts or do not try to find delinquent student-borrowers once the repayment period has begun. "In one case, a student the bank said it couldn't find—and listed as a default—actually worked for the bank," according to one school director.

Because the banks have not found the student loan program sufficiently attractive to allocate adequate funds to meet the demand, a number of measures have been taken to "make FISLs more competitive with other loans." This approach reached its zenith in 1972, when Congress authorized creation of the Student Loan Marketing Association (SLMA), "a private, profit-making, stock-issuing corporation" to purchase student loan obligations from banks and then sell them to a profit-seeking "secondary market."

"We're doing something that we've tried to avoid for six years—we're admitting that we need to make it into a commercial instead of a public-service venture," an Office of Education division chief said. In addition, it is likely that SLMA will affect the default rate, as it further removes the student's repayment obligation from any experience or relationship that is meaningful to him.

The failure of FISL in the proprietary schools is an indictment of more than the concept of the program or the intentions of its administrators. The real failure lies in the mammoth void in the American educational system that renders proprietary vocational training the only choice for a large segment of tomorrow's labor force—and which creates a moral imperative to pour government money into vocational studies even though the "career industry" has not matured and is not adequately regulated. Congress has found itself in a position in which to deny funds for proprietary training would be to discriminate against a substantial body of American students, yet to authorize such expenditures is to almost insure that large amounts of money will be wasted. Unfortunately, the controls which have been created to insure against abuses enable blame to be conveniently diffused. First, there is the individual school which is at fault. Next there is the accrediting agency, which, by accrediting the school, fails to enforce its own standards. Then there is the Office of Education's Institutional Accreditation and Eligibility staff, which fails to remove the negligent accrediting agency from the approved list, and finally, the Division of Insured Loans, which technically could, if it chose to ignore the other three levels of expertise and responsibility, revoke a school's eligibility by simply pressing a button on the computer.

But of course the real tragedy is not the waste of tax money—Americans have developed a high level of tolerance for that. Proprietary schools are trading in more than money. Their most precious currency is the fragile dreams of America's aspiring poor—dreams that, with the complicity of a well-motivated government program, too often end in a harsh dawn of anger and hopelessness. ■

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THE REAL REASON NIXON FIRED COX

Why did Richard Nixon fire Archibald Cox? Because he was afraid of giving up the nine Watergate tapes. That's the answer that seems to be in most people's minds today. But suppose it is not the reason. Suppose Nixon finally hands over those nine tapes and they contain nothing incriminating against him. Nothing would do more to take the wind out of the sails of the movement to impeach Nixon.

Nixon would have pulled off a classic play from his beloved game of football: the draw. In the draw the quarterback draws the defense's attention to one player—in this case himself—when they should be attending to others. If the impeachment forces are drawn to concentrate all their attention on the nine tapes and the tapes turn out to be non-incriminating, the public will almost certainly conclude that Nixon is innocent.

What could Nixon gain through the draw? Making the issue turn on the nine Watergate tapes would detract from other areas that should be investigated: Nixon's involvement with ITT (see page 32 of this issue), the milk lobby, San Clemente, and the Hughes-Rebozo contribution. These were the kinds of things Nixon may have been thinking about when he proposed the Stennis deal on the nine tapes, on condition that Cox "make no further attempts by judicial process to obtain tapes, notes, or memoranda of presidential conversations."

William Safire, who knows his Nixon, says "Nixon's big play focuses attention where he wants it, on the tapes, which do not worry him as much as the less-publicized targets of investigation."

The Washington Post's Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who know their Watergate, contend that the nine White House tapes were not in fact the central issue of the tug-of-war between Cox and the White House: "Sources close to Richardson and Cox said they were more concerned about getting other memos, notes and documents that also were subpoenaed from the White House. Various documents and memos from the White House could have been crucial evidence in cases expected to be brought by Cox concerning Nixon campaign contributors, the International Telegraph and Telephone company, White House wiretapping, and secret investigations into news leaks, the sources said."

If our concern is with what is basically wrong with the Nixon Administration, we should not focus our attention on the small part of the story represented by the nine tapes. They may—or may not—hang him. But the larger story is the one that must be aired, and it is the one Nixon was trying to keep Cox from discovering.

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Moral Myopia: 'The New York Review' and the New York Intellectuals

by Suzannah Lessard

Money—wanting it and making it—is something most Americans can talk about with candor. The urbane humanist, however—that person who has somehow positioned himself as the keeper of values as a writer or publisher through association with universities, foundations, or high-toned publications or as active worker for reform—has trouble expressing personal feelings on the subject without raising the specter of hypocrisy. On the one hand he opposes the supremacy of money (and its handmaidens, success and power) as the guiding values of American life and has dedicated himself to promoting higher values—whether social, intellectual, or artistic. On the other hand, not only are success and power vital factors in his elite world (after all, one wants to *accomplish* something) but substantial sums of money, now more than ever before, are sloshing around within his reach. In fact, just like everyone else in America, the amount he pulls in is very likely to be looked upon by his peers as one reliable index of his importance or worth—gauged, of course, in terms of those high social, artistic, or intellectual values which set his group above the rest of his countrymen.

The collective of high-class book publishers, periodical editors, reviewers, and writers concentrated in New York is a case in point. To begin with, if they think of themselves as a professional group at all, it is as "the literary world"—a term that connotes cocktail parties rather than a sense of collective responsibility, in the way that doctors, for example, think of themselves as collectively responsible for the health of the nation. Yet they clearly do have a collective responsibility, because together they control what will be read. They not only produce the books, but they tell the world at large which of those books are worthwhile.

Secondly, the way in which this work is done would seem on the face of it to raise the most pressing issue of conflict of interest. The specialties are not segregated: there is nothing to stop a productive member of this group from putting on the three hats of writer, editor, and reviewer (manufacturer, inspector, and consumer reporter) in the same day. Worse, everyone knows everyone else. And finally, though the currency may be "ideas," there is a great deal of regular old cash involved.

Nevertheless, there has been very little written about the practices of

Suzannah Lessard is an editor of **The Washington Monthly.**

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the literary world. The reason is that there are plenty of rejoinders to such statements about cash in publishing, and a fair-minded person would have to admit that most of the defenses are at least partially true. The complexities they raise can make relevant, realistic criticism of the "literary" world seem an almost impossible project to undertake without bogging down into hairsplitting qualifications, acknowledgments of the good work many of the principals have done, and recognition of the difficulties faced by anyone who tries to promote quality in a crude, commercial world. Potential Naders have found their momentum further slowed by the unpleasant sense of self-righteousness implicit in an attack on one's earnest peers, the fear that one will have to distort and exaggerate obscure conspiracies to make any point at all, and the suspicion that the topic amounts to little more than in-group gossip.

In *The End of Intelligent Writing*,* however, Richard Kostelanetz has given us a full, shocking picture of power structures and malpractice in the literary world. He overcomes the scruples that have discouraged more timid souls by simply realizing the fears behind them in all their glory, as he assaults the subject with the kind of paranoid abandon Hunter Thompson might reserve for ITT. Far from bending to the rigors of fair-mindedness, he attributes the worst motives to all people at all times. With thinly disguised personal rancor he welds conspiracy onto conspiracy, pointing with abandon to blood, dead bodies, and faceless hordes of refugee writers camped in anonymity outside the gates of acceptance.

On first reading, my reaction was one of regret that a better, more judicious writer hadn't shouldered this task. But on reflection it occurs to me that Kostelanetz's Sodom and Gomorrah approach is probably the only way a writer could propel himself through this material from beginning to end. The result is a book infested with fallacies and distortions, but through his crash approach, Kostelanetz manages to flush out some very significant issues that otherwise would have remained hidden in the thickets of complexity. Rather than nitpicking at this book I would like to try to isolate what I see as those genuine issues raised in the course of the tirade.

**The End of Intelligent Writing: Literary Politics in America.* Richard Kostelanetz. Sheed and Ward, $10.

Literary Badminton

To start with some of the raw material, Kostelanetz's thesis is that an exclusive Mafia-like club exercises monopolistic control over the country's channels of communication. At its core the club is much like self-promoting literary cliques, or "schools" of the past, such as the "Southern" writers, the "Jewish" writers, or the *Partisan Review* crowd, except that it has achieved unchallenged dominance. In other words, the situation is no longer pluralistic. Rather than competing with each other, these groups have arranged themselves around a powerful center in what Kostelanetz describes as an onion-like pattern of leaves, or leveled groupings arranged hierarchically and cooperatively at varying distances around a center.

To roughly sketch his paradigm: at the center Kostelanetz locates five people—Midge Decter (ex-editor of *Harper's*, now at *Saturday Review/World*), Jason Epstein (vice-president of Random House, key founder of *The New York Review of Books*), Irving Howe (editor of *Dissent*), Norman Podhoretz (editor of *Commentary*), and Robert Silvers (editor of *The New York Review of Books*). These people may have temporary spats with each other, but they are fundamentally in collusion, as are competing Mafia capos. Some examples from the inner, middle, and outer leaves: inner leaves (26 members altogether), Roger Straus, Jr. and Theodore Solatoroff (book editors),

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"Paul's got an article in the magazine section, Ann's book is reviewed by Dick, Buddy has a short piece on the Op-Ed page, Roy has something in the travel section, there's an essay by Norman on Matthew's new movie, and a letter on endangered species by your mother."

Dwight Macdonald (critic), Willie Morris; from the middle leaves (total 36), George Plimpton (editor of *The Paris Review*), Mary McCarthy, Richard Kluger (editor, critic), Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and from the outer leaves (total 81), the late W. H. Auden, Tom Hayden, Richard Poirier (critic), Martin Duberman (*New York Times Book Review*).

Kostelanetz does not imply that everyone on the list is either a slave or a conspirator. His onion simply describes a loosely concentric pattern of group influence and coordination held together through the unimpeachable connections of friendship, like-mindedness, and mutual respect. One might quibble with some of his placements, or, more seriously, object that this tells only a tiny part of the story. It is also not the first time such lists have been presented: Norman Podhoretz's book, *Making It*, is a rich source of names and class labels. But most people familiar with the literary world would agree that the exercise Kostelanetz has undertaken is in itself legitimate, just as it would be legitimate in describing social power in a suburban town (theoretically egalitarian) or, say, a pattern of relationships in the legal community whose members interchangeably occupy Wall Street and the Justice Department. Such a paradigm would rarely tell the full story, and alone would inevitably distort the truth, but it provides information which goes a long way toward illuminating why the story works out the way it does.

Examples of villainous collusion, of course, are necessary if such patterns of connection are to have any significance, and Kostelanetz has them marshaled to make his point. For example, close (and often mob-powerful) friends often give each other boosts in the publications of their own fiefdoms. Thus he tells how Willie Morris, then editor-in-chief at *Harper's*, ran a pre-publication excerpt from Norman Podhoretz's *Making It* (Podhoretz being a friend of Morris as

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well as husband of Morris' *Harper's* colleague, Midge Decter); shortly afterwards Podhoretz reviewed his friend Morris' book in his own publication, *Commentary* (the review appearing alongside an ad for *Making It*). The review, of course, was a puff. On other occasions enemies massacre each other. Sometimes such exchanges are more vicarious, with members of a clique picking up the gauntlet or bestowing the laurels on each other.

When exchanges are noticed they usually provoke little more than a cynical chuckle at a bit of parochial gossip. The idea that out-of-town readers (who do not have privileged knowledge of mob interrelationships and therefore take such reviews at face value) are entitled to something more objective doesn't occur.

The concept that writers should automatically disqualify themselves from reviewing books in cases where their objectivity is likely to be in jeopardy seems impractical—because "everybody knows everybody else;" because, as Kostelanetz points out, the practice is to have eminences review equal eminences, which means writer and reviewer are highly likely to have had a long association with each other on the playing fields; and because badminton through the review pages is completely accepted. Thus Kostelanetz quotes Podhoretz's explanation of a bad review of his own book by Edgar Z. Friedenberg in *The New York Review* as the natural splenetic result of *Commentary*'s recent rejection of a Friedenberg piece. And of course everybody also knew at the time that Podhoretz and Epstein were having a feud, and so it was expected that Epstein's fiefdom, the *Review*, would publish a massacre—a lot of people probably looked forward to the good fun.

Making It, incidentally, is one of the few candid descriptions of power structures, class labels, and mutual promotion in the literary world. It was generally rejected as a crass bid for status, as tasteless, and even pathetic. But in rejecting the book for these reasons critics avoided dealing with the fact that Podhoretz had also truthfully analyzed how the literary world works. Resistance to that truth runs very deep. *The End of Intelligent Writing* was rejected by 30 publishers before it found a home at Sheed and Ward, which happens to operate out of Kansas. Given the book's quality, no one publisher can be impeached for his decision. But the fact that *all* of them turned it down adds up to something more than a consensus on its quality. The reasons given in a spot survey of rejectors included quality, but, equally, comment that the subject wasn't "important" and that the material amounted to little more than gossip. When the book comes out this month it will probably also be discredited as stale, hardly the author's fault under the circumstances.

Kostelanetz also outlines "mini-mobs" within the onion—small groups with strategically placed members who coordinate to promote each other. Mini-mobs show on an easily comprehensible scale how the big mob works. Thus he charges that highly successful literary agent Lynn Nesbit regularly got contracts for her authors with editors David Segal (Harper & Row) and Hal Sharlatt (Random House, now at Dutton). When the books came out, their jackets would carry blurbs from other Nesbit authors. Nesbit's husband, Richard Gilman, literary editor of *The New Republic*, would see that they were favorably reviewed in his magazine (often by other Nesbit authors) while neighbor-friend Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, a *Times* book review editor, would see they got a boost in his domain.

Whether you go for the *big* conspiracy or not, these kinds of alliances unquestionably exist.

The Core of the Onion

Kostelanetz speculates that the Nesbit mini-mob ceased to function because its members weren't vicious enough with non-cooperators, which

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brings us to a third category of mobs and mob practices, which he calls "literary muggings." This is an extension of the practice of having enemies review each other's books. Muggings take place when people don't go along with the relevant mini-mob. A carefully picked reviewer, for instance, innocently gives the wrong kind of review. The review is either cut, and the reviewer no longer gets jobs from that publication and/or subsequently finds his own book either ignored or massacred in publications within that mini-mob's jurisdiction. Or, a writer directly criticizes important mob powers in print and later finds that an enduring grudge is at work trying to squeeze him out of print or even out of employment.

Kostelanetz's background material is a bit thin here, but his point is well taken to this extent: a relatively new, unknown writer who wants to get published regularly in the prestigious publications would be well advised to make himself aware of the constellations around his editorial contacts, to discover the patterns of allegiance and try not to violate them.

Kostelanetz's *piece de resistance* is taken from the core of his onion. There he finds all his patterns of collusion on a massive scale. The axis of collusion in this instance is between the super-firm, Random House (including subsidiaries Knopf and Pantheon), with Vice President Jason Epstein, and super-prestigious mob organ *The New York Review of Books*, which Epstein founded. Kostelanetz's central contention is that *The New York Review* favors Random House (and especially Epstein's) authors in the following ways: by reviewing proportionately more of their books than books published by similar houses, by commissioning large numbers of them to write in the *Review* (thereby publicizing them and hence their books) and often to write reviews of other Random House authors; by publishing more favorable than unfavorable reviews of Random House books, and by regularly giving such pieces either about or by Random House authors extra prominence, either on the cover, or by isolating single books for review rather than putting them in bunches. Random House holds up its part of the deal by buying disproportionate amounts of advertising.

The thesis is well documented. For example, quoting from Harry Smith's *Newsletter*, Kostelanetz records that in 1968, 17 of 73 books (over 23 per cent) singled out for individual review were published by Random House. This was more attention than was given to Viking, Grove Press, Holt, Harper, Houghton Mifflin, Oxford, Doubleday, Macmillan, Harvard, and Princeton combined. Yet these 10 other quality houses together published six times more books than Random House that year. Twenty-five per cent of *New York Review* reviewers that year had Random House books in print, and 37 per cent of that group reviewed other Random House authors. Three out of four reviews of Random House books were favorable. More than half of the essays published that year were by Random House authors. And Random House bought twice as much advertising as anyone else. Kostelanetz's own, far less complete, survey of issues from July, 1971 to June, 1972, finds that of 37 publishers having books singled out for review, 16 were published by the Random House conglomerate—while the nearest competitor had three. Of 10 writers publishing two or more essays, nine were Random House authors, and so forth.

Kostelanetz does not record how many of the books reviewed in that year were Random House books, however. An independent survey by Terry Pristin of *[More]* for 1972 would indicate that there has been a dramatic decline in at least this aspect of collusion. Of about 221 books reviewed (four issues were missing), only 19 were published by Random House. The Pristin survey unfortunately does not enumerate Random House authors reviewing, Random House

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books isolated for review, or Random House authors writing essays, all highly relevant statistics in such a query. A limited survey of our own, of the issues from June through December, 1972, produced the following statistics: Of 41 reviews of single books, only five were Random House conglomerate books and none were written by authors whose books had been published by one of the Random House publishing companies. There were 46 essays, 10 by I. F. Stone and only two others by Random House authors. However, of the 153 pieces total (including poems, reviews, and essays), 61 were written by authors with Random House conglomerate books in print. These figures would seem to indicate that while the imbalance has been corrected to some extent, a symbiotic relationship between Random House and the *Review* continues to flourish.

Early Chauvinism, Collective Fortune

But why should we care about all this? To Kostelanetz the answer is easy: we must care because the people in power are ersatz intellectuals committed only to capitalizing on their own brand of pseudo-culture and not to the meaty stuff of what he pompously refers to as "intellectual history." Teary-eyed, he says we must care because the mob is out to suppress new ideas—those of the young (that aging group to which Kostelanetz and I belong) and the avant garde—presumably the serious stuff of intellectual history. He presents all his evidence of nefarious practices as proof of their cynical use of culture-mongering to achieve undeserved fame and money for themselves.

I can't really address his claims of suppression of the avant garde of theater, poetry, and fiction because I haven't been involved with it. I do agree that the present establishment is a little like the Israeli parliament, whose average age 20 years ago was 43 and is now 63. Now that the New Left has dimmed, I don't see a great influx of young blood making its mark, and while this has to be taken in part as a comment on the new blood, I think there is a certain generational complacency blocking them.

But unlike Kostelanetz, I think the question of why does one care is more difficult to answer because in my judgment the members of the present establishment are pretty good keepers. I think there is an extraordinary volume of high-quality books, I think the people involved are truly dedicated to their work (which doesn't mean they aren't susceptible to blindness or the lures of success), and I think mob platforms like *The New York Reviewof Books* show a vitality, courage, and standard of excellence which, however infuriating it may be to those left out, cannot be denied. Kostelanetz's righteous self-pity and blanket rejection of his elders as philistines serve only as blinds to the real issues implicit in his material, issues which are as pertinent to his and my generation as they are to anyone else.

To me, the key observation in this book, the starting point for thinking about the patterns, is Kostelanetz's treatment of the smaller "schools" or clubs of the recent past in which the present establishment has its roots. The thought gets lost in his emotional treatment of the present, but it still applies, perhaps with even greater force. In describing the groups of the past, like the Southern writers, the Jewish writers, and the cliquish relics of the WASP literary establishment which once reigned supreme, Kostelanetz remarks on the incredibly self-enclosed chauvinism cultivated by these groups. Whatever sociological or geographic badge of identity these cadres assumed, they promoted that badge as the exclusive credential for "greatness," as the brand of sensibility which was carrying the torch of art and enlightenment into the future.

His examples of this kind of chauvinism are so final they are almost funny. An anthology of "Best Short Stories from *The Paris Review*," published in 1959, includes only one

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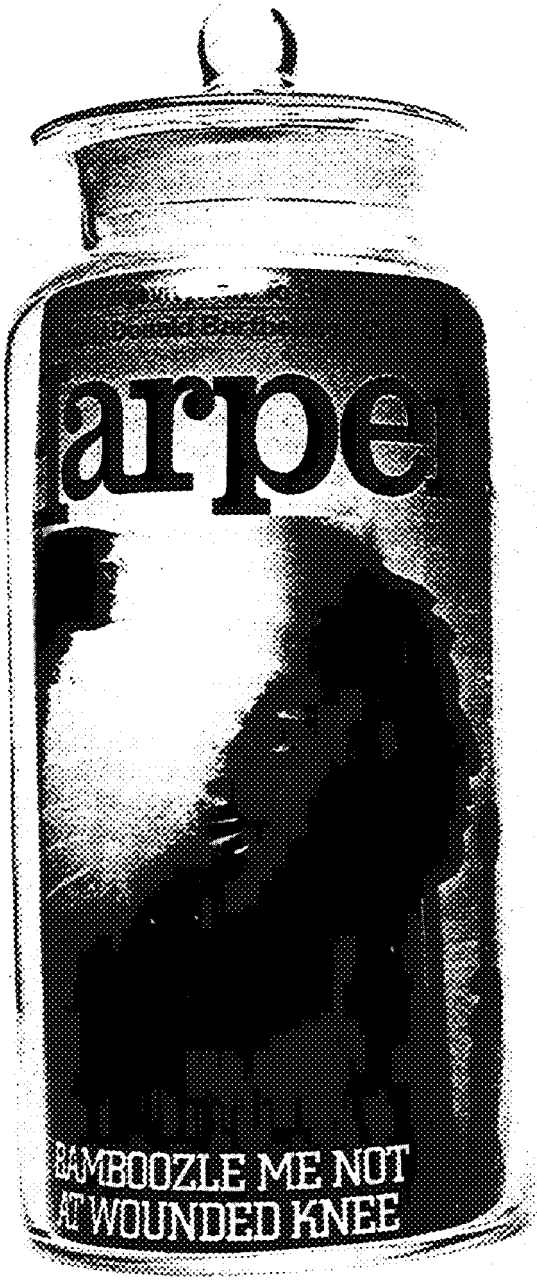

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Jewish writer out of 14, and a *Harper's* anthology of 90 pieces put out in the same year, includes only three Jewish contributors (Oscar Levant, Betty Friedan, and Sigmund Freud) out of a total of 90. On the other hand, Norman Podhoretz's *Doings and Undoings*, a collection of essays and reviews published in 1965, contains, according to Kostelanetz's scorecard, "pointed praise for Saul Bellow, Joseph Heller, Paul Goodman, Nathaniel West, Bernard Malamud, Isaac Rosenfeld, Herman Kahn, and Norman Mailer. . . " and "equally sharp dismissals of Mary McCarthy, John Updike, Dwight Macdonald, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John O'Hara, Jack Kerouac. . . " and so forth. A year later, Katherine Anne Porter's list of the "best" of post-World War II fiction informs us that only those from south of the Mason-Dixon line have access to Olympus: Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, James Purdy, Truman Capote, etc., etc.

Kostelanetz rightly scores such "lopsided toutsheets" which parade as impartial, serious evaluations of all participants, and he goes right to the heart of their purpose. In one of the most brilliant observations in the book, he writes: "A literary lobby is united not only by personal friendships and fairly similar artistic attitudes, but also, and most important, by a sense of collective fortune. Therefore, the professional help that individuals render each other is based upon a sense of entwined professional investment." By successfully promoting the superiority or just the uniqueness of a particular brand of sensibility, the groups achieved the situation in which any work stamped with their particular seal—"A great Southern book"—stood a far greater chance of success than if it had to stand alone on its own merits. Under these circumstances, Kostelanetz points out, a number of distortions inevitably take place. For example, second-rate talents are received as first-rate by a public blinded by the promotional ruse of the sensibility seal. And members of the group, the best along with the middling, are inclined to bend over backwards to make their work fit the brand name: if he knows what's good for him, a Southern writer had better stay away from the urban experience, a "Jewish" writer had better stick to it, and a "WASP" writer had better hover close to New England and leave the juleps and magnolias alone.

Neither of these influences can be perceived as particularly constructive, but a third is far more serious: Having launched themselves on one raft, and having made their brand name a ticket to commercial success, members of the group encounter heavy pressures to promote each other, because the success of one is the success of another, not in terms of the quality of their work, but in terms of cash and fame. A situation thus develops in which it takes courage to depart from the party line—to deflate brand-name reputations which are undeserved, to acclaim a writer who comes from outside the group, and certainly to seriously question the legitimacy of the group label or to criticize group practices.

Now that the bloom has faded from these labels, it's easy to see how they could become promotional devices, and how individuals could be imprisoned by them. One can also see how legitimate bonds and a genuine sense of fraternity would obscure the spurious, entangling elements in this kind of group identity, and how the subversive sense of collective fortune would go unnoticed because of a genuine sense of purpose. Mutual discovery, after all, must have been a heady thing: as Kostelanetz points out, Mencken's description of the South as the "Sahara of the Bozart" reflected a general attitude, and the Jewish experience simply didn't exist in American literature until the "Jewish writers" stormed the WASP palace with their banner. The line between solidarity in order to overcome resis-

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tance to your beliefs and solidarity (or collusion) because your own fame and success is hitched to a group is very difficult to discern.

Star Making, Star Breaking

Kostelanetz's theory is that in the early sixties the anatomy of the literary world changed from a pluralistic structure, in which several clubs competed in promoting themselves, to a monopolistic structure consisting of one big club which draws allegiance from the members of all the little clubs whose edges were beginning to fray. This new club chose, or became known by, the non-denominational label, "the New York intellectuals," and its ascendency was dramatically marked by the appearance of *The New York Review of Books*. I think this is true. When the *Review* appeared, names from all the little clubs appeared in it, writing, at the start, for free. Up to then the only powerful reviewing medium on the scene was *The New York Times Book Review*, which was run by an aging military buff who thought that the best reviewing policy was to praise everything. Just as whole generations felt their time had finally come when Kennedy became President and the Eisenhower Administration was relegated to the past, so a whole chorus of writers and intellectuals saw *The New York Review* as "their" magazine. It was. And all together they became the new group.

Here Kostelanetz goes off the deep end and we suddenly have not only a group, but shrewd, self-serving villains, ingeniously manipulating the innocent writers drawn into their web into serving their power structure, much as innocents were duped into collusion when the CIA infiltrated intellectual magazines. Editorial policy, personalities, and business practices thus get rolled into one big firebomb of evidence. I find it curious that, as with many detractors of the *Review* group, Kostelanetz's anger seems to be fired to greatest heights by their success, particularly their entrepreneurial success, as though this kind of cleverness were evidence in itself of corrupt, self-promoting motives. He seems to confuse critical success with financial security, completely ignoring the fact that running an independent operation like the *Review* is a life and death struggle for survival and is certainly nothing anybody in his right mind would see as a way to fill the coffers. This allows Kostelanetz to hold up the *Review*'s survival tactics, such as forming money-making subsidiaries or using gimmicks like the sale of David Levine reproductions, as evidence of ulterior motives, and to talk about "stockholders" and members of the "board of directors" as though he were discussing General Motors.

Nonetheless, a large and influential group was born, and inevitably group promotional politics followed, generating a set of pressures. The real source of the pressure, as always, was that identification with this elite crowd became a tremendous personal asset, which automatically translated not only into a kind of higher literary-social standing, but also into higher advances for your book, and more people eager to buy it. Thus only a saint would not in some small part of his soul desire to remain a part of the group, and also to perpetuate it. For example, both stars and big targets are important ingredients in maintaining group identity, and so a subterranean pressure builds up for cooperative action in star-making and star-breaking along with a group reflex against aberrations. Thus a member of that group (particularly a marginal or potential member of the group) intuitively would have known that he would not be aiding his fortunes by ripping apart one of the current stars in a non-brand name forum, like, say, the pages of the old *Saturday Review*. This sort of knowledge doesn't result in a strict rule of behavior. The point isn't that mutual promotion dominates, as Kostelanetz would have it. The point is that the pressure inevitably is there and exerts its influence,

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setting in motion a whole range of adjustments.

Armchair Moralizing

One doesn't need a theory of group politics to score the Random House-*Review* statistics. It simply won't do for Epstein to deny that he has any influence with the *Review* because nobody believes him, and even if those involved know in their hearts that the figures represent a coincidence (Random House publishes many high quality books, etc.), the appearance is so bad and it casts such doubt on the integrity of the editors, that for this reason alone it ought to be (and to some degree has been) checked. The fact that heavy criticism didn't bring this pattern to a rapid halt is an indication of how unconcerned the literary world is with its own integrity, how the "superior" nature of the work somehow bestows an immunity, when at the same time the same people think that lesser creatures, engaged in similar conflicts of interest, ought to be sent packing to Leavenworth.

But the statistics also tell a lot about group politics in its more negative forms. Since this group had no overt seal of superior sensibility—in fact, have always liked to deny that they constitute a group at all—one cannot isolate promotional favoritism as easily as with the small groups of the past. But the Random House statistics, like litmus paper, show up not only memberships but also inclusion with a double bind. One can only conclude from the figures that being both a Random House author and a *New York Review* contributor constituted a kind of super-privileged membership, and that not only were super-privileged members aware of each other's status in reviewing each other, but each one stood to gain more than usual from—or was unusually indebted to—the group mechanism. For certainly as far as political books were concerned, the Random-*Review* combination was, as Kostelanetz puts it, a "celebrity-making machine." Whatever other lofty motives may have been involved each step of the way, this was indisputably true. Is it any wonder, then, that three out of four of the 1969 Random House reviews were favorable? What beneficiary would want to damage such a machine by running down another beneficiary or risk excommunication by aggravating either phalanx—the publisher (or more accurately, Epstein) by knocking another Random House book, or the *Review* by knocking one of its regular contributors, so often one and the same? The winning combination which, for example, catapulted Noam Chomsky, a tedious Johnny one-note, to fame is not something to be trifled with. As always, this pressure could easily parade under other banners, such as the need to show solidarity where controversial political views are concerned. Unfortunately, a radical philosophy, like literary sensibility, does not automatically create immunity to the lures of cash and celebrity.

The Random-*Review* statistics appear to be a shocking indication of favoritism toward the company, but their real meaning, I think, is simply that the members of the group tended to go to Jason Epstein for contracts, and that Epstein published the people that he (and often the *Review*) was interested in. I don't believe for a minute that *Review* writers or editors would adjust their views just because a book was published by Random House (for example, *Review* regular Mary McCarthy recently slammed Random's book of the year, *The Best and the Brightest*, in the *Review*).The adjustment, or predisposition to be favorable, would crop up only when the book was written by one of Epstein's authors, who would also, in all likelihood, be a member of the gang. So what the figures really show is not an effort to make Random House profits higher, but a personal membership list and a celebrity-making machine.

The dangers of this sort of thing

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are difficult to demonstrate without getting into elaborate critiques of content, and even then one can only speculate on what caused what effect. Generally the danger is that the group psychology can create a closed circuit of ideas, a too-cozy, too self-assured atmosphere in which it is easy to be seduced by your own image into forgetting to ask questions about substance. One of the detrimental ways this shows up in the *Review*'s content is in the lack of references to the touchstone of firsthand experience. Most of the pieces are written from private libraries; there is very little emphasis placed on the value of *being* there, or even of talking to the people who were there, particularly in government. Although it has nothing to do with politics, one of the most striking examples of this is the *Review*'s series of "conversations with Stravinsky" which purported to be the editors' interviews with the composer but were actually concocted *in toto* by Stravinsky's assistant, Robert Craft. All this fraud really accomplished was false puffery; the questions made the editors seem extraordinarily knowledgeable and acute on the subject of contemporary music, and the answers made Stravinsky come off as a charming, eclectic parlor wit, which was true in neither case. This may have been an event in the history of image making, but it wasn't much use for anyone interested in what Stravinsky might actually have had to say, however clumsily. After all, he—not Robert Craft—was the person with the experience and accomplishment that made readers want to know what he had to say in the first place. But evidently, the editors of the *Review* didn't particularly care about what the real Stravinsky might have to tell us, and thought that Stravinsky the creation of a younger, far less interesting person was better, because it made an entertaining read.

None of the political writing, to my knowledge, is a fraud in this sense. But too much of it is secondhand—writing from papers—without checking in with the difficult taskmaster, experience. Thus we have a lot of Chomsky-like moralizing from library armchairs and practically no trips to the Pentagon or the White House to inquire how real human beings come to create horrors like Vietnam. The real danger in this is not just the absence of a necessary dimension, but the development of a kind of absent-mindedness which can lead people to fail to recognize when they or their own are on thin ice—or even going over a waterfall. For example, the *Review* has made few really ghastly mistakes for a magazine willing to go out on a controversial limb, but the day they decided to print the how-to-make-it diagram of a Molotov cocktail on the cover, their guardian angel must have been on a holiday. This is an old incident which at the time earned the *Review* much richly deserved abuse. I unearth it now because the mistake arose from the inflated self-confidence (and perhaps a distraction with image) which prevented the editors from asking questions about substance. The inside stories on how the decision was made all suggest it happened rather flippantly—the drawing was lovely, and they forgot to ask what it meant, failed to see that they were showing the kids on 11th Street how.

The *Review*'s treatment of the militant New Left all along was marred by a preoccupation with melodrama (for example, publishing transcripts of the Chicago Seven trial, including parts where some of their own stars testified) and personalities (such as Jerry Rubin, of all unlikely heroes of the intelligentsia) at the expense of scrutinizing New Left ideas or asking questions about where, in real life, those ideas led. Since they had skated over thin ice without looking down for some time, it's not surprising that on the day the Molotov cocktail diagram was okayed they didn't have anyone around to say, "Are you crazy? Think what this means." An unexamined sense of self-importance, oddly enough, can cause

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people to forget that what they are doing is actually serious, involving responsibility in real life.

The Fruits of Belonging

My purpose here has not been to present a full-scale critique of any one group or publication but to look for the common denominator that may help explain a wide range of situations. The cash and celebrity-making advantages that group membership offers is, I think, the clincher, although there are many other motivations to adjust, such as the pleasant aspects of belonging, of group approval, and of working with friends in an atmosphere of success. There is also the problem of believing in that self-important image, of becoming too confident, and simply of forgetting to ask questions. But all across the group scene the kicker that makes such mechanisms pinch is the wildly arbitrary way in which books make money. The difference between having and not having a celebrity-making machine behind you might mean the difference between $2,000 to $15,000 for three years of work and sums like $50,000 right on up to $1 million. That's enough to make a backbone far stronger than Jeb Magruder's weaken.

Celebrity-making arrangements are by no means located in clear conflict of interest situations like the Random-*Review* example. A machine can be a smooth working coordination between individuals strategically placed in several large institutions, or even a free-floating collection of people identified by a publicly recognized idea like women's liberation or a badge of sensibility like "the new journalists." Always the promotion of quality or an idea will be a powerful, indisputably legitimate factor behind the organism. The pressures talked about here can also work on an individual not associated with any group at all who simply wants to do well, and, like a freshman congressman, he may discover that in order to do his own good work he must learn

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the ropes, learn the pet interests and prejudices of the established powers, and tiptoe around them, giving a little here in order to get a little there. In fact, self-promotion and team identification go hand in glove to create the invisible slippage in values. The group psychology, however, creates a situation in which people are particularly anesthetized to the sense of slippage.

An example that might balance the *Review* situation is the group psychology in the writing arm of the feminist movement. This is the creation of another generation and is in most aspects completely dissimilar to the *Review* group. The membership is much more loosely defined, it is connected to an activist movement, and the quality of the output is astonishingly uneven. You don't have to dig here for the symptoms either—in many instances the symptoms have actually been institutionalized as group doctrines. Unlike the *New York Review* situation, where members denied their group's existence, the women's phalanx is proudly self-proclaimed and wields its seal of approval quite openly. Thus *Ms.* dismisses Joan Didion as, alas, just another ordinary slave of a sexist culture, while a seventh-rate talent like Jill Johnston whizzes to stardom on the magic carpet of kosher "liberatedness." The group has also put across the idea that only accredited members may review each other—and has done this so successfully that even *The New York Times Book Review* accepts the principle, at least halfway, just as it quasi-accepted the idea that only accredited militant blacks are qualified to pass comment on black literature. At the same time, some group leaders openly state that mutual criticism will only weaken movement self-confidence, that solidarity above all else must be shown in public, thus guaranteeing the gist of mutual reviewing.

However strongly one may believe in the principles of feminism, one cannot avoid the fact that these practices will inevitably result in the suppression of the free flow of ideas, a closing of the circuits, and a cultivation of a dangerous intellectual immunity, all in order to allow the free flow of propaganda. These tenets create enormous pressure to keep within the party line; in order to depart from it one has to be prepared to be regarded as a traitor, never a very pleasant prospect. But on top of this there is, once again, the powerful lure of a celebrity-making machine—which the movement, inevitably, has become. Anyone setting out to write a book of feminist subjects knows that moderate departure from the party line may well cost not just the seal of approval and the esteem of the group, but quite a lot of cash and fame as well. The same applies when one is reviewing, for signs of disloyalty may in the future block access to the magic carpet. Only if you come out dramatically opposed to the party line, as did Midge Decter in *The New Chastity*, does financial suicide cease to loom.

In fact, at a certain point the pressure begins to push towards extremism in the opposite direction, perhaps accounting for the overly antagonistic tone that blurs the better ideas in this book. This is created by the market (which favors the extreme) as well as by the membership mentality. The people who feel the pressure are not so much the Joan Didions (although even here, praise from an accredited source would undoubtedly boost sales), but people whose reputations are built entirely on group identification, or less well-known people who stand to gain a tremendous amount by receiving the seal of approval. A more serious cost is the deterioration of thoughtful change, and the unchecked propagation of really bad, even dangerous, ideas like those that encourage hatred of husbands, fathers, brothers, and lovers as therapeutic and reinforcing. This sort of idea ought to be shot out of the sky immediately. Not by Midge Decter, but by people clearly within the movement. But the ideas are left

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flying. Other writers may not include them in their own tracts, but they don't come out and attack them face on. The situation doesn't really seem to raise issues of responsibility because the cozy, closed-circuit that does not push minds to think through to the underlying realities makes the ideas seem harmless. And then, of course, there is a material risk involved in becoming known as something less than a right-on sister.

To Get Along, Go Along

Literary and intellectual groups are a very natural and in many ways constructive phenomenon. They will always exist and members of them will always, by definition, be partial to each other. They will also, inevitably, generate the sorts of pressures discussed here, particularly when the public perceives them as a group and thus makes an entwining of professional fortunes inescapable. This is the point at which identification with the group becomes an invisible hobble on intellectual freedom and exchange, weakening a person's connection with his best, most honest instincts and imprisoning individuals in cowardice just the way the fear of lost security imprisons a bureaucrat into going along when he should speak up. Other professions have developed codes covering the broader areas where personal gain and professional duty conflict, and I think the literary world would do well to develop similar standards. These might, for example, enjoin writers to disqualify themselves from reviewing close friends and colleagues, or censure close connection between review publications and publishing houses. At the very least this kind of standard would formally acknowledge the danger in such practices, which currently are considered normal.

But just as you can't legislate effectively against Watergate, you can't enforce integrity in the literary world. The most effective defense against this kind of slippage in values is recognition of the pressures behind the slippage—identification of the priorities that allow it to happen. Motives are particularly veiled in the literary world, however, because the admission that success and money are powerful lures seems in itself an admission of moral turpitude to someone who has set himself up as dedicated to preserving and promoting the highest values.

This is just one result of a generally confused, paradoxical concept of integrity on the Left: in one moment purity is unattainable—i. e., to be pure we must purge our lives of the most minute participation in the Vietnam war—and in another moment ordinary ethics are the hallmark of the naive (weak)—i.e. the Bobby Kennedy-esque cult of unscrupulous (pragmatic) political tactics for a good cause. The latter is part of the thought that allows quite remarkable travesties to go unnoticed in the literary world: the idea that the adversary is so mighty and we are so small that in a way our conflicts of interest are our only defenses, the only way we can hope to prevail in an antagonistic world. The former—purity is unattainable—makes us think the cause is hopeless and therefore not worth pursuing in the real world. Neither concepts holds water: as with everybody else in America, corruption grows from those invisible hobbles that we allow to entangle us and that imperceptibly prevent us from following—or even identifying—our best instincts. Kostelanetz's book, imbalanced as it is, can make you stop musing on what the rich and the mighty should care about and ponder what you should care about instead. In doing so you might be amazed to discover some common ground with our favorite targets, but that in itself—recognizing personally how those perversions of values can creep into one's life—can only lead to better, truer intellectual exchange (touching on experience) about perversion of values and corruption in the big bad world of business and politics. ■

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Tidbits and Outrages

Knight in Tarnished Armor

One of the few Republican Party leaders who has come through the Watergate affair with virtue unblemished is George Bush, now chairman of the Republican National Committee. Last summer Bush even assumed the role of defender-of-fair-play, publicly rebuking the Ervin Committee for hiring an investigator, Carmen Bellino, who Bush said had bugged Richard Nixon in 1960.

It is disheartening to note that Bush's accusation did not indicate a renaissance of scruples at the RNC. His accusation largely depended on an affidavit prepared by John Leon, a Washington private detective who died of a heart attack 11 days before Bush aired his charges. What Bush failed to mention were some of Leon's other interesting theories.

According to Jonathan Kwitny of *The Wall Street Journal*, who talked with Leon a week before his death, Leon claimed that "Watergate was a frame-up" and the "man behind it all is Edward Kennedy." His reasoning: The Democrats intended to use the burglary as a campaign issue.

The Republican National Committee chairman used Leon's charges against Bellino, even after Kwitny informed Bush's administrative assistant about Leon's other bizarre ideas. But there has been a happy ending for all sides, as Bellino was completely cleared by a special subcommittee formed by the Ervin Committee, and Bush's reputation for fairness has remained unscathed. He continues to insist that the new Republican National Committee would never get involved in an operation as "dirty" as Watergate.

'The Friends of Tony Boyle'

Now that the full flavor of Tony Boyle's leadership of the UMW has become apparent to everyone, it is interesting to recall the prominent Washington citizens who lent their names to one of his more charming projects. We refer to the operation under which Boyle kept the miners' pension fund in a non-interest-bearing account at the National Bank of Washington, which was owned by the UMW. This had the effect of taking money from the widows, orphans, and other beneficiaries of the pension fund and putting it—through dividends transformed into salaries—into the pockets of Boyle and other UMW bureaucrats. The directors of the bank during this fleecing of the

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By the Numbers

"Revenue sharing formulas" have become lexicon, but we hadn't seen one until a copy of the computations used in Pennsylvania to distribute federal funds to local governmental units arrived in the mail.

We wish we could reproduce the formula in its entirety, but we are faced with the sort of problem that confronts an art magazine when it has to reproduce a 40-foot fresco on a standard-sized page. Following this lead, we offer a small but representative segment of the formula. Since an expensive computer is needed to complete the calculations, we do not believe that the armchair mathematicians among our readers should feel cheated.

All this can be seen simply as an object lesson in the federal government's unfailing ability to make everything it touches unbearably complex. But for the more paranoid, there is an alternate explanation. The complexity of the revenue sharing for-

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needy included such people as: Clark Clifford, former Secretary of Defense; Crosby N. Boyd, chairman of the Board of the Washington *Star-News*; Patricia Roberts Harris, chairman of the Credentials Committee of the 1972 Democratic National Convention; Joseph Danzansky, president of Giant Foods; Liz Carpenter, former aide to Lady Bird Johnson; Stephen Woodzell, president of Potomac Electric Power Company; and Elwood R. Quesada, former head of the Federal Aviation Administration. A refreshing though remote legal possibility is that each of them could be held personally liable for an $11-million judgment recently rendered against the bank and the union in behalf of the pension fund.

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mula was designed as a way of removing the allocation of federal money from the political thicket. But since local governments cannot check these computations without blowing their revenue sharing checks on computer time, they themselves are at the mercy of whoever controls the revenue sharing computer.

What Is a Bureaucrat?

In a recent letter to *Time*, Nathan T. Wolkomir, president of the National Federation of Federal Employees, answered an article charging that federal bureaucrats were too many and too well paid:

. . . wage surveys have repeatedly shown that when viewed alongside his counterparts in private industry, he is on the wrong side of the stick at every turn.

And what is a bureaucrat? A Customs Service border guard risking his life daily in the war against drugs and contraband? A Veterans Administration nurse laboring to restore the nation's Viet Nam wounded to health? The Forest Service fire fighter breathing smoke in Oregon and California at this very hour? A cancer researcher? The FDA technician whose revelations on thalidomide saved untold numbers of unborn babies from hideous disfigurement? The clerk who dispatches a Social Security payment to a senior citizen in your own family? Which of these bureaucrats would you trim from the federal payroll?

The answer to this final question is, of course, none of the above. For years we have been trying to identify those government employees whose work contributes directly and in an irreplaceable way to the public well-being, and we are grateful to Mr. Wolkomir for having pointed us in the right direction. Unfortunately, for every one of these people there is at least one planner, analyst, or manager who does nothing and gets a larger salary for doing it than do the nurses or fire fighters.

A Dash of Nepotism

The situation sounded like grist for a week of angry Jack Anderson columns. A leading congressional figure is discovered to have placed his niece on his committee's payroll. And if that weren't enough, he also got his two daughters summer jobs on a related subcommittee. The culprit, according to the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, was none other than Sam Dash, chief counsel of the Senate Watergate Committee. Both daughters were employed by Sam Ervin's separation-of-powers subcommittee and the eldest, a Brown University senior, was earning $657 a month. Niece Barbara Shatten is still on the payroll of the Senate Watergate Committee.

When it comes to trying to explain, it is obvious that Dash has picked up some techniques from the witnesses he has interrogated. Taking the "I don't recollect that at this time" approach, Dash has claimed total ignorance of a 1967 law designed to curb nepotism on Capitol Hill. He has also learned the importance of semantic hair-splitting when cornered. Dash described Ms. Shatten as a "distant niece" because he wasn't "close to that side of the family." As for his daughters, they are "independent, bright, and hard working." But we suspect that the ghosts of Tom Dodd and Adam Clayton Powell may have looked up with a smile when Dash asked plaintively, "Why should my daughters be penalized just because I'm chief counsel?"

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ITT and Watergate: The Colson Connection

by Timothy H. Ingram

The Colson memorandum was introduced to the Watergate Committee on August 1, 1973, without fanfare, almost as a throwaway. Sam Dash, the Committee's chief counsel, had obtained it the night before from a secretary who worked at the White House, and he wanted to slip it in somehow during the third day of H. R. Haldeman's testimony.

Dash was asking Haldeman whether he always informed the President of potentially embarrassing developments—and he offhandedly cited the Colson memo as an example. It was a truly astonishing document. Dated March 30, 1972, the same day Jeb Magruder said that final plans for the Watergate break-in were approved, it warned of the existence of other internal memoranda that would "directly involve" President Nixon in arranging the favorable settlement of the government's antitrust suit against the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT). The evidence "would lay this case on the President's doorstep," warned White House Special Counsel Charles Colson.

Thanks to Senator Edward Gurney, the Committee's attention was deflected from the Colson memorandum before anyone had a chance to gauge its importance. Overshadowed by the Haldeman testimony, it was soon forgotten by both the Committee and the press.

Failing to pursue the logic of the Colson memo, both the Watergate Committee and the press lost a golden opportunity to try to answer that often-forgotten, but fundamental, question: Why, on June 17, 1972, did seven men burglarize and bug the offices of the Democratic National Committee? What was it that was worth the high risk, the $250,000 cost, and the amount of planning and energy that went into the Watergate operation? What, in God's name, were

Timothy Ingram is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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Howard Hunt and his faithful Cubans looking for?

Like so many other elements of the hearings, the Colson memo was introduced without a framework and without any real effort by the Committee to fit it into the larger picture. The task of sorting out the importance of the Colson memo—as with other items introduced and then forgotten during the hearings—was left to the press, already overextended by the sheer bulk of the Watergate hearings.

One reason for the neglect of the Colson memo was that it dealt with ITT and therefore appeared non-germane in the midst of the Watergate hearings. Scandals, like metaphors, do not mix. ITT also raised the complicated jurisdictional questions involved in defining congressional turf. The Senate Judiciary Committee had already spent two months looking into the ITT affair, and as a result the Ervin Committee tended to shy away from the issue.

Amid the Committee's preoccupation with "who-knew-what-when" and "is-he-repentent," the hearings lost their focus. At the end of the first phase, television viewers knew about the discrepancies between the Dean and Mitchell testimony, but had little more understanding of the rationale for the break-in than they did a year earlier.

The problem is one that would seem obvious to any fictional detective. Neither the Watergate Committee nor the press has ever developed a coherent theory of the case. At no point during the entire proceedings has any hypothesis been advanced that could be tested against the statements of various witnesses. Instead, most of those involved in the Watergate hearings have proceeded with a detachment worthy of the most pedantic of scholars. "We won't form any opinions until all the facts are in" sounds judicious, but it certainly doesn't equip the Committee to ask relevant questions along the way.

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Lacking their own hypotheses, the Committee investigators have been left with the theories generously offered by the burglars themselves. Howard Hunt, for example, gave an explanation which met all the criteria except plausibility. Perfectly contrite, looking prison pale in his wash-and-wear suit, Hunt asserted that his men had hoped to find evidence at the DNC connecting the Democrats to tainted money from Cuba.

Many found it hard to take this explanation seriously. As Senator Daniel Inouye asked incredulously, "Did you expect the photographer to find somewhere in a ledger: 'Received from Fidel Castro, *x* number of dollars'?" Hunt's explanation also seems to rest on a flimsy factual basis. Michael Richardson, the one outsider in a position to know what the burglars were photographing, has contradicted Hunt's claims. Richardson works at Rich Photos in Miami and developed the film shot inside the DNC headquarters during the burglars' first successful break-in. Richardson told me that the pictures showed surgical gloves holding memos and letters, some of which bore the DNC letterhead and were signed "Larry." There were no photographs of financial records or account books.

If members of the Committee did not press Hunt and the others harder for an explanation, it may be because they suspected that ultimately there was only a "why not?" motivation for the burglary. In other words, with so much money, so few scruples, and such a finely developed sense of paranoia, the Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP) should almost have been expected to have bugged the Democratic Party headquarters. If the men surrounding the President could tolerate the bumbling of a Donald Segretti, why wouldn't they spend $250,000 to keep Gordon Liddy and his ubiquitous flow charts out of their hair.

The problem with this hypothesis is that the Watergate burglary seems to have been far more than a simple make-work expedition. Jeb Magruder explained that the White House regarded O'Brien as the Democrat's "most professional political operator" and feared that if O'Brien remained as DNC chairman he could be "very difficult in the coming campaign." O'Brien's importance is underlined by Magruder's testimony that Charles Colson had telephoned him "sometime in February" to urge that Magruder "get on the stick and get the budget approved for Liddy's plans; that we need information, particularly on Larry O'Brien."

Why was Larry O'Brien so important? Given the ferocity of the Democratic Party's fratricidal struggles, it is hard to believe that even the "most professional" Democratic political operator could intimidate such a hard-nose as Colson. But something else could—and did—scare Colson, who probably was the prime motivating force behind the break-in. That something was ITT.

This hypothesis does not purport to explain every detail in the case, but it does offer a way of fitting a number of unexplained facts together. Admittedly, the Watergate burglars might, through serendipity, find other useful evidence at the DNC. But the burglars' main purpose was to find out whether Larry O'Brien had the missing ITT memoranda. If the documents were as damning as Colson feared, they might provide the issue that could allow even George McGovern to defeat Richard Nixon.

A bit of scene-setting may be useful. In March, 1972, when the final go-aheads were being given for Gordon Liddy's plans, the White House was in near hysteria over the ITT affair. On February 29 Jack Anderson had blown the scandal open by publishing the "Dita Beard memorandum." This document indicated that the Justice Department had let ITT off the hook on a major antitrust charge after the company had pledged $400,000 for the Republican Convention.

In the months preceding the Water-

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gate burglary, as Attorney General nominee Richard Kleindienst went through a protracted inquisition before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the White House grew increasingly suspicious that Larry O'Brien had inside information on the whole ITT affair. In December, 1971, three months before Jack Anderson's Dita Beard story, O'Brien had sent a letter to John Mitchell asking whether there might be a connection between "ITT's sudden largesse to the Republican Party and the nearly simultaneous out-of-court settlement of one of the biggest merger cases in corporate history."

Even after the confusing ITT story faded from the headlines, O'Brien and the DNC refused to drop the issue. The statements and publications that came from O'Brien's office during this period were remarkably prescient. In one DNC publication, *Fact*, a box entitled "Watch This Man" itemized the wheelings and dealings of the President's personal attorney, Herbert Kalmbach, a man at that time virtually unknown.

To those close to the President, O'Brien looked like a dangerous man. He had the dope on ITT, and ITT was what frightened the Administration the most.

Another indication of the White House concern over ITT was John Dean's conversation with General Vernon Walters, deputy director of the CIA, in February, 1973. Referring to a burglary of the Chilean embassy in Washington nearly a year earlier—in which the intruders took documents rather than property—Dean told Walters he believed that Frank Sturgis, a Watergate burglar and former CIA employee, was involved. In April of this year Dean told James Schlesinger, then director of the CIA, that several CIA veterans who had been involved in Watergate had taken part in the Chilean embassy incident. The apparent motive for the burglary was to search for documents exposing ITT's plans to subvert the Allende government in Chile.

Meanwhile, a special group made up of Colson, John Ehrlichman, and Fred Fielding of Dean's staff was on plumbing duty at the White House, examining the ITT documents that had not yet hit print. To their horror they realized that copies of some of the most potent evidence were still unaccounted for. This was the fear that led Colson to compose his memorandum of March 30, 1972, outlining the evidence that could implicate the President and Mitchell:

> A memo sent to the Vice President addressed "Dear Ted" from Ned Gerrity [of ITT] tends to contradict John Mitchell's testimony because it outlines Mitchell's agreement to talk to McLaren [head of the Justice Department's antitrust division, the man who had pushed the case against ITT] following Mitchell's meeting with [ITT President Harold] Geneen.
>
> It would carry some weight in that the memo was written contemporaneous with the meeting. Both Mitchell and Geneen have testified that they discussed policy only, not this case, and that Mitchell talked to no one else. The memo further states that Ehrlich-

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man assured Geneen that the President had "instructed" the Justice Deparment with respect to the bigness policy. (It is, of course, appropriate for the President to instruct the Justice Department on policy, but in the context of these hearings, that revelation would lay this case on the President's doorstep.) . . .

There is a [Herb] Klein to Haldeman memo, dated June 30, 1971, which of course precedes the date of the ITT settlement, setting forth the $400,000 arrangement with ITT. Copies were addressed to Magruder, Mitchell, and Timmons. This memo put the A. G. [Mitchell] on constructive notice at least of the ITT commitment at that time and before the settlement, facts which he has denied under oath. We don't know whether we have recovered all the copies. . . . In short, despite a search, this memo could by lying around anywhere at 1701 [Pennsylvania Avenue, CRP headquarters.]

The memo implicating Mitchell was still at large; the even more explosive evidence concerning Nixon was in the files of the Security and Exchange Commission, and thus, far from invulnerable. To Colson the danger was clear: "Kleindienst is not the target, the President is. . . . Make no mistake, the Democrats want to keep this case alive, whatever happens to Kleindienst."

O'Brien had been the most effective adversary on ITT. The consequences of his obtaining the missing memos could be disastrous. Finding out how much he knew—and, if necessary, preventing him from using what he did have—might easily have justified an operation like the Watergate burglary.

One reason why the ITT-Watergate connection has not been explained is that John Dean, who appeared to expose every other White House intrigue, did not mention ITT in his testimony. Dean's silence may have been based on self-interest, since Dean had been intimately involved in the original ITT settlement.

The limited mind set which saw the Watergate scandal in one category and the ITT scandal as a separate entity has also blocked a thorough investigation of both episodes and their cover-ups. What no one seemed to realize is that events build on themselves and that scandal does not respect jurisdictional boundaries. The special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, now has the wayward memos that Colson panicked about in his letter to Haldeman. Perhaps the memos will help Cox develop the theoretical framework the Watergate Committee has found so elusive. ■

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THE CULTURE OF BUREAUCRACY:

Rooting for the Other Team: Clientism in the Foreign Service

by Roger Morris

"Tell Madamn Ghandhi how lucky she is," Lyndon Johnson called after a startled Indian ambassador as he left a White House meeting in 1968. "She's got *two* ambassadors workin' for her. . . you here and Bowles out there."

Not that the President doubted the national loyalty of Chester Bowles or the U. S. embassy in India. But the Johnson sarcasm, an epitaph on years of bureaucratic battles, struck at a complex problem in the bureaucratic politics of foreign policy.

Charged to understand and interpret the views of other governments, U. S. diplomats are sometimes drawn on by career or conviction—by the peculiarly insular culture of their bureaucracy—to defend or at least acquiesce in those views. Ensnared in a parochial view of the national interest, some officials come to resist almost instinctively any policy that threatens to rub the client regimes they deal with the wrong way. The results of this "cliency," which makes diplomats align their interests with those of their hosts, are sometimes absurd, sometimes tragic.

Cliency has become a major occupational disease of modern American diplomacy. Although many American diplomats refuse to yield to its impulse, even at the expense of their careers, cliency influences much of what the United States does or does not do in the world—from its failure to speak out against genocide in Africa to the multiple tragedies of

Roger Morris, who has worked in the State Department and National Security Council staff and is a legislative assistant in the Senate, is writing a book about humanitarian problems in foreign policy.

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Vietnam. And it has taken a heavy toll on government—in honesty and objectivity, in time and energy sapped by bureaucratic conflict, in idealism, in enormous human costs abroad that might have been lessened, and in the further erosion of public trust in foreign policy.

The Red-Headed League

In the summer of 1967, after a sequence of political intrigues and tribal massacres, civil war broke out between Nigeria and its secessionist Eastern Region, which became Biafra. When Biafra collapsed more than two years later, hundreds of thousands were dead, the vast majority from starvation caused when Nigeria blockaded rebel-held territory. The war was essentially a battle for power between post-colonial elites. Neither side would subordinate its political or military goals to relieve the enormous human cost.

Under both Presidents Johnson and Nixon, United States policy toward the conflict was a combination of political neutrality, including an arms embargo, and a major commitment, over $100 million, to the international relief efforts operating on both sides. Behind the relief policy was an extraordinary outpouring of public concern and bipartisan congressional support across the political spectrum. All the major American religious relief agencies were involved in aiding Biafra, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross and several private European relief groups.

There were disputes in Washington over whether the U. S. should play an intermediary role in trying to end the conflict, but no apparent question that the United States should make some humanitarian response to the starving children of the Nigerian civil war. Or so it seemed. In the United States embassy in Lagos, ardently committed to its Nigerian clients, it was a different world.

Only weeks after the outbreak of the war, the wife of an American embassy official in Lagos startled her Nigerian dinner guests with a toast to "the destruction of Biafra." When numberless Biafran children, dying of protein deficiency, their hair turned rust color, became symbols to the world of the war's wanton suffering, United States embassy officers in Lagos somberly explained to visitors that the clever rebels had found an obscure red-haired tribe, starved its infants, and put them on display.

The mission's zeal was not always so overt. Sources that served in the Lagos embassy during the early months of the war recall a pervasive suspicion in the form of official restrictions on the contacts of junior officers lest they acquire rebel sympathies. Officials tell of recurrent attempts to alter or altogether suppress reports to Washington unfavorable to Nigeria, including eyewitness accounts of Nigerian atrocities. Dissent, according to many accounts, was severely punished by unfavorable performance ratings.

There was visible irritation with the embassy back in Washington, where Nigerian policy was guided by career officers who had served in the country earlier. Letters, then official visitors, were sent to urge more complete reporting. One source recalls that the CIA even sent an investigator to Lagos to discover why the embassy's intelligence was so different from all accounts of the war in the media and from other governments. But those efforts soon gave way to a weary resignation and State's own growing reluctance to offend victorious Nigeria as Biafra's collapse became imminent.

To the end, the Lagos mission resisted the awful reality of Biafra's starvation, refusing to support the presentation by Nigerian relief authorities of vital scientific data on the famine developed by U. S. public health experts. Convinced that the public, Congress, the White House, and the State Department were either duped by Biafran propaganda or else

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Lyman Kirkpatrick was a high official of the CIA from 1947 to 1965.

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were conspiring to dismember an important client, the Lagos embassy largely followed its own foreign policy for the duration of the war.

Our Friends the Enemy

Cliency is seldom so bizarre or concentrated as the Lagos example. More often, missions inflict their bias through long battles of bureaucratic attrition. And nowhere have the campaigns been longer than on the South Asian subcontinent, where India and Pakistan—and the United States embassies in each country—are historic rivals.

"We need a modern tank here. You know what the enemy has." The speaker was a United States military attache talking to a visitor to Pakistan in 1967. It wasn't the American embassy that needed modern armor, but the Pakistani Army; the "enemy," of course, was India. Some months later, an equally earnest Air Force attache used home leave in Washington to warn a White House aide "unofficially" that he believed the "enemy" was "up to something" around Kashmir. This time the "enemy" was Pakistan.

Frequently, the United States missions in both countries seem to have believed there were also "enemies" in Washington—the New Delhi mission when the United States began to arm Pakistan in the early fifties, and Rawalpindi when congressional pressure forced a United States arms embargo against Pakistan during the 1965 war with India, and more permanently in 1967. Almost as soon as the 1967 decision was made, the United States embassy in Pakistan urged our government to circumvent the embargo by selling the Pakistanis United States-made tanks from some third country. This device, predictably enough, was anathema to the American embassy in India.

But the same mission in New Delhi which saw the wisdom of denying Pakistani generals their weapons in 1967 found no reason at all to recommend withholding food aid as a means

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of persuading a venal Indian bureaucracy to sustain long-overdue agricultural reforms. This and other disputes between the mission and Washington, leaving President Johnson to doubt if he had an ambassador to India, illustrate the pernicious character of cliency.

Chester Bowles was then on his second tour as ambassador in Delhi. An early casualty of the Washington bureaucracy under President Kennedy, he was to prove the most humane policy-maker of the glittering lot. In his earlier experience in Congress and the executive branch, Bowles had observed the anti-Indian prejudice that dominated parts of the government. To his New Delhi appointment, say several sources, Bowles brought an abiding determination to shield U. S.-Indian relations from the biases experienced. Former aides say Bowles was often privately frustrated with the Indians but usually concealed his criticism in reporting to Washington in the belief that long-run United States interests in India were more important than any single clash that might resurrect old hostilities.

Unlike his Lagos counterparts, Bowles was not imagining antagonism in Washington. Congressional distaste for India's neutrality was clear. LBJ and Dean Rusk fell into annual rages when Madame Gandhi sent birthday cables to Ho Chi Minh. "How long can you kick a cow in the udders and still expect it to give milk?" Rusk once asked with Georgian earthiness in an "eyes only" telegram to Bowles.

Bowles must have felt the same way himself at times, and if only he had posed that same question to Washington, he might have been taken more seriously by other policy-makers. As it was, his beleaguered, self-righteous cliency tended to provoke the very forces in Washington he hoped to disarm. After reading the cables from Delhi and hearing in person Bowles' spirited defense of the Indians, LBJ seems to have become convinced that if *he* didn't insist on Indian reforms, his embassy *never* would. And whatever the merits of the issue, he was probably right.

The Melady Lingers On

The reluctance of an American diplomat to break with his client can be less a matter of the size and importance of the country than of the official's personal investment. In 1969 Thomas Melady, a non-career ambassador but an author of books on Africa, was appointed ambassador to Burundi, a tiny and obscure Central African state with a history of savage tribal disputes between the Tutsi, the dominant minority, and the Hutu, who made up 85 per cent of the country's population but had been effectively denied political and economic power. The Tutsi's chronic worry was that the United States would take sides with the suppressed Hutu. "Painfully aware of what had brought down his predecessors," as one of his colleagues put it, Melady set about energetically to overcome his client's fears.

"He told them every chance he got," remembered an official who read Melady's telegrams, "that the United States was absolutely impartial as between Tutsi and Hutu, that their relations were their own affair, and he apparently got through to them."

United States-Burundi relations were never better. Then suddenly in May, 1972, the country was plunged into a frenzy of killing, with the Tutsi regime presiding over systematic murder of as many as a quarter million Hutu. When army units ran out of ammunition they used hammers and nails to continue the slaughter. Officials remember trucks loaded with

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corpses passing the U. S. embassy in the night, bound for bull-dozed graves outside the capital.

Those officials at the same time recall Melady late at night in his embassy office temporizing in sending the first reports of genocide to Washington, afraid that the State Department would somehow "overreact" and destroy his carefully nurtured relationship. Melady impressed upon the Burundian regime "the necessity of avoiding *undue* bloodshed" (as distinct from bloodshed *due*). The U. S. embassy in Burundi initiated a joint letter to the government from several members of the diplomatic corps. "It was a low-key thing," explained one witness, "saying we were concerned with their difficulties." Another official remembered the letter as "tactful. . . and it got no real response."

Then on May 25, amid evidence that men, women, and children were being murdered at the rate of a thousand a day, in what one intelligence officer called Burundi's "final solution," Thomas Melady routinely left the country for a new assignment as ambassdor to Uganda. He was never to speak out on the horror he had seen, his "access" to his Burundian clients presumably still intact. In the remorse and internal division that followed in the State Department when the U. S. government stood by silently throughout the carnage, there were differences over some individual motives, but little doubt about Melady's. "He wouldn't sacrifice the relations he'd built up," concluded several sources.*

Creamed Over the Coffee Trade

Melady, it turned out, need not have worried so much that the State Department would react against the genocide. The Department's African bureau seems to have been equally worried about clients, this time their own, among the other African states. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) refused to take action on Burundi, all its members haunted by their own problems of tribalism and sensitive to any precedent for outside interference in the continent. The OAU Council of Ministers, in fact, sent the Burundian regime a message in June, 1972, which amounted to support of the repression. Once the Africans had reacted, the U. S. State Department had its policy.

Though the United States purchased the bulk of Burundi's coffee, which accounts for 65 per cent of the country's export earnings, American bureaucrats dismissed out of hand a proposal to suspend the coffee trade, if only to dissociate the U. S. from the murders. "If we'd involved ourselves in this," said a policy-maker, "we'd be creamed by every country in Africa for butting into an African state's internal affairs. We don't have an interest in Burundi that justifies taking that kind of flack." By the same reasoning, officials ignored an internal Department legal memorandum pointing out that the U. S. had obligations under international law and treaties in the face of human rights abuses. (These were "a reality, not just theoretical language," the memo said.) "The OAU didn't see it that way," said an official. "If the African countries don't want to get involved, where do we get off putting our nose in," demanded another U. S. diplomat. "The U. S. simply has no real interest in Burundi other than moral indignation and that's not enough."

Looking back on the Biafran tragedy, a ranking State Department officer made a similar judgment: "My regret is that there was such emotion generated in this country. . . today we have strained relations with one fifth of Africa because of the focus on relief. . . ." For that official and others in the State Department's regional bureaus, relations smooth or strained with an entire region can be the daily reality of work, much as one

*The Burundi policy is documented in a recent Carnegie Endowment study directed by the author, *Passing By: The U. S. and Genocide in Burundi, 1972.*

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client government can absorb the allegiance of an embassy abroad. The hungry children come and go from public sight; the clients are always there. Staffed predominantly by Foreign Service officers bearing career pressures and marked by a parochialism similar to that felt abroad, the Department often sees its role as protecting its clients from the special perils that American democracy holds for traditional diplomacy—public naivete ("emotion" over Biafra), a meddling press, an uninformed or partisan Congress.

Do Biafra and Burundi mean that cliency has kept us from intervening as often as we should? Not necessarily, for cliency distorts the way we make decisions more than it imposes any clear direction on our foreign policy. We may disagree about whether or how the U. S. should ever intervene in cases of starvation, slaughter, or rebellion, but we should be able to agree to make those policy choices with all the logic and clear-headedness we can muster.

The State Department is not alone in steering our foreign relations around obstacles to clear thought. The Pentagon, CIA, AID, Commerce, Treasury, Agriculture all crowd upon the scene in Washington and abroad with programs, bureaucratic prerogatives, various clear-cut views of the national interest, and, of course, foreign clients. Added to the personal stake and convictions of career officers there is a host of other concerns (domestic clients) that may put a premium on access with foreign regimes—from the munitions industry to Iowa farmers to ITT and Wall Street. To business or bureaucracy trail lines of interest from nearly every corner of the world, at once an index of our colossal power yet a mass of potential inhibitions on the independent and principled use of that power.

The extreme example of the interplay of bureaucracy and cliency, as of much else, is obviously Vietnam. In a sense, it was a return to the medieval practice of cliency. A country can do no more for its client states, after all, than fight their wars for them. But to the bureaucracies in Washington and their proconsuls in Saigon, the war was often only another arena for the jousting of power and interests. "They could accept more easily a complete reversal of objectives or grand strategic design than a revision of their own roles," reflected a veteran of the bureaucratic battles both in Washington and Saigon.

Behind the lines and sometimes on them were the endless jurisdictional disputes—CIA operatives, generals, deputy ambassadors, AID administrators, each with Vietnamese clients on whom he was somehow dependent for success, each suspicious that his colleagues would expand their domain and advance *their* clients at his expense. The war, to be sure, was more complex than this single dimension. But the dishonesty, the zeal, the secrecy, the ambitions and fears that drove us on belong in large measure to such bureaucratic politics.

Cliency-in-Waiting

The most dependable clients for all these purposes are not always actually in power. But subtle intervention, a kind of cliency-in-waiting, can help put them there. Indonesia and Chile are cases in point. Economic pressure on left-wing regimes, coupled with a steady relationship with the colonels in the wings, helped to produce less troublesome client regimes in both countries, albeit again at a cost in human rights enormous in Indonesia and yet to be counted in Chile.

Ideology certainly plays a role in these decisions, which are customarily made in the White House. But bureaucrats may also find anti-Marxist dictators, especially the efficient martial variety, easier to deal with as clients than unruly democrats like the Indians.

Ideology has also explained one of the few consistent exceptions to cliency—our relations with the USSR. U. S. diplomats in Moscow and on the

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Soviet desk in Foggy Bottom are expected to be habitually aloof from their clients. In this they are unlike all their colleagues except, perhaps, those in South Africa. The Russian attitude may all be changing, however, with the latest detente. One wonders what new clients we may acquire when Chase Manhattan invests in Siberia.

Cliency seems both a cause and effect of the larger malaise enveloping the State Department and Foreign Service. Controlling its abuses probably begins with the long-needed reform of that bureaucracy.

It flourishes, like other dubious practices, in the guild mentality of the State Department, in an elaborate career system that rewards caution, compliance, and evasion while punishing dissent or "mistakes." In an environment where advance depends on conforming to habit, it is perhaps the most common habit of all.

Cliency seems almost inherent in the psychology and sociology of diplomatic work abroad. The British used to mourn the victims of this parochialism as being "too long in the East." State Department desk officers now call it "localitis," certain that it afflicts only their colleagues in the "field."

The malady probably begins with the need to rationalize against the realities of foreign service, whatever the venue. While Henry Kissinger flits dramatically from Georgetown to Peking, most American diplomats in a hundred other capitals are locked in tedious, obscure, and rarely meaningful work. And people who spend most of their adult lives dealing with other bureaucrats in remote places tend to persuade themselves, sooner or later, that dealing with other bureaucrats in remote places is pretty important. From there it's a short step to the added conviction that good relations with a particular regime, are, or ought to be anyway, urgent national business.

In any event, to be without live clients, right or left, in or near power, is often to be bureaucratically im-

Carl Purcell, A.I.D.

potent either in a mission abroad or in Washington. American officials assigned to forgotten arenas like the UN are seldom a bureaucratic match for their colleagues whose clients are actual governments with the real power. Special State Department offices responsible for international law, environmental matters, refugees, or population control may create an organizational illusion of authority, but none acts without the veto of the regional bureaus, whose clients generally frown on such concerns.

The assistant legal advisor who wrote the unheeded memorandum on human rights during the murders in Burundi personally carried a copy to each policy-maker in the African bureau, skeptical that it would ever reach them by regular staff channels. At the time, however, the legal advisor's office was *never asked* to prepare an opinion on whether events in Burundi constituted a violation of human rights. Moreover, career officers who are assigned to clientless duties like legal affairs know that the promotion system of the Foreign Service follows bureaucratic power,

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and that it rarely rewards such "marginal" work. "Did you ever know any official," asked a young diplomat, "whose career has been advanced because he spoke out for human rights?"

Bureaucratic and career interests reinforce this sense of priorities. If there is direct official involvement with the country, such as an aid program or arms sales, there may naturally develop close working relationships with the recipients. Some individual careers and bureaucratic prestige become inevitably linked to the "success" of programs which, in turn, may depend on U. S. influence with the foreign regime. For the American mission as a whole, these programs represent a tangible investment of time and reputation, a call on Washington's resources, and thus further proof of the mission's importance—all bureaucratic assets to be nurtured and protected, and all assuming continuing cooperation from the clients.

Even without major programs to dispense and husband, American missions in most countries are likely to acquire a strong collective tendency toward agreeable relations with the host government. U. S. diplomats of every rank depend on the regime and the elites around it for much of the information and influence by which their performance is measured. It is what the Foreign Service prizes as "access," the ability to hear and to be heard, which many career officers regard as the essence of their profession.

To that end, American diplomats may cultivate their contacts literally day and night. In many countries their universe is peopled largely by distinct groups—politicians who are sensitive to slight or interference, landowners who abhor economic reform, police who see conspiracy, and not the least, the ubiquitous colonels who exude authority and grow impatient with democracies. Over a desk or at a dinner party, the U. S. diplomat feels the importance of these citizens (a reflection of his own), their ardor, their wrath or approval at first hand—realities which may be scarcely appreciated in distant Washington, though they loom large from Athens to Jakarta, from Rio to Lagos.

That distance from Washington gives a U. S. mission abroad its strongest single impulse toward identifying with the interests of its hosts. Among diplomats who escort junketing congressmen and watch the steady shrinkage of their aid appropriations, who see departments recurrently placed under the direction of a new set of "amateurs" and ever hostage to politics or fickle public moods, there grows the conviction that one of the major burdens of career foreign service is to protect U. S. relations with other regimes from the excesses of Washington. That perspective, too, can be personal as well as bureaucratic. Who indeed is the *expert* on the scene? Who, after all, spends his life defending the national interest on these frontiers? The view of Washington as ignorant and distracted, as the source of perhaps dangerous meddling for transient reasons, can give the career officialdom of a U. S. embassy a common zeal, sometimes a fervid sense of mission, in representing the position of another government.

There are also human commitments no institutional factor quite explains—an intense loyalty some

Answer to October puzzle:

1 E	X	2 E	C	3 U	T	4 I	V	5 E	■	6 A	C	7 E	R	8 B
X	■	L	■	M	■	M	■	V	■	H	■	Y	■	E
9 C	H	E	A	P	■	10 P	R	I	V	I	L	E	G	E
E	■	C	■	I	■	E	■	D	■	P	■	O	■	F
11 L	A	T	E	R	A	L	■	12 E	X	P	E	N	S	E
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13 C	R	O	W	S	N	14 E	S	T	■	15 E	X	16 A	L	T
O	■	N	■	■	■	X	■	L	■	■	■	T	■	E
17 N	O	S	E	18 S	■	19 P	A	Y	M	20 A	S	T	E	R
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21 P	L	22 A	T	T	E	R	■	23 I	N	Q	U	I	R	24 E
I	■	R	■	S	■	T	■	S	■	U	■	T	■	T
25 R	H	E	T	O	R	I	C	S	■	26 I	R	I	S	H
E	■	N	■	U	■	S	■	U	■	T	■	O	■	O
27 D	R	A	F	T	■	28 E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	S

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diplomats cultivate for a country or region, a matching of personalities and views that may leave an American official feeling more comfortable with a Pakistani general than with many of his own colleagues, the prejudices and emotions released by being witness to dramatic events such as civil wars.

Any of these influences may blur that critical boundary between the U. S. national interest, or simply what is right, and the bureaucratic or private interests of American officials abroad.

Then, too, the Department of State and its officers are still peculiarly isolated among the great agencies of government. The problem is not only that diplomats spend years out of the country. Even in Washington they seldom encounter the people they are supposed to represent. Nearly every other bureaucracy must face some public constituency—welfare mothers at HEW, rent strikers at HUD, truckers at Transportation. And nearly every other bureaucracy has felt recently the cleansing light of exposure in the era of public interest research. But State continues to govern by inertia and default, *in camera*, unaccountable except to bureaucratic self-interest.

Yet, ironically, State may also be the bureaucracy with the greatest potential for responding to the public interest. Foreign Service officers are free of the huge programs and special domestic interests that so often freeze their colleagues in other agencies.

It is ironic too that cliency, as a product of this isolation, has only served to deepen the eclipse of the State Department in the making of foreign policy. Presidents watching some of the absurdities and distortions of State's efforts to protect their clients have been further confirmed in their accumulation of power in the White House.

The answer to the many problems of cliency surely starts with the opening of the foreign policy process—much as the habits of government are under challenge domestically. And of the many reforms that would mean for the Foreign Service, the most vital are genuine provision for internal dissent and a wider exposure of American diplomats to their own society.

Diplomacy can be a career truly open to talent, its ranks refreshed at all levels by the infusion of short-term officers from outside government, men and women chosen precisely for their independence and unorthodox and critical views of policy. Those who represent America in the world could usefully spend at least half their careers *in* the country that pays their salaries, in more than token positions on congressional staffs, on newspapers, in what State Department bureaucrats call with nervous sarcasm "the real world" of people and perspectives beyond the encapsulated worlds of embassies and bureaus.

But none of this is new. These steps are endlessly discussed, and the outlook for real change is still bleak. Foreign Service officers know that their pseudo-elitism, their parochialism, their penchant for cliency are all a malignant waste of individual talent and of the Department's potential role. Their reaction is too often a weary cynicism. Foreign Service reform may resemble nothing so much as the reforms of tsarist Russia—agreed necessary for survival, much heralded, never quite taken before it was too late.

They know more than any critic that an honest and sophisticated cliency—as a sensitive appreciation of other societies—is the heart of diplomacy. No government, however willful, can rationally dispense with that observation and interpretaion, least of all in this incendiary age.

But only the career service can perform that essential role with integrity, unafraid of career or bureaucratic loss. Only they can ensure that the real clients of American foreign policy are the people beyond governments—people at home and abroad who must pay the flesh-and-blood costs of our decisions. ■

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Memo of the Month

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 26, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: COLONEL HUGHES

The President would like to have the bowling ball man come in and fit Mrs. Nixon and Tricia for balls as soon as possible. Could arrangements be made for this immediately, please.

H. R. HALDEMAN

cc:
Mr. Chapin

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Heading the Highway Lobby Off at the Overpass

by David Martin

In February, 1970, Francis Sargent, the Republican governor of Massachusetts, declared a moratorium on all road construction in the Boston area to examine not just where and how expressways should be built, but whether they should be built at all. Two years later, Sargent canceled $1-billion worth of highways planned for in and around Boston and proposed spending the money on a mix of roads and rails, which might go more to the heart of solving the city's transportation problems.

This was a sensible decision. Boston is one of 38 cities which will have to impose restrictions on automobiles in order to meet federal air standards. But it was politically risky because Massachusetts, like every other state, was prohibited by federal law from spending that $1 billion on anything other than a superhighway. No highway, no money. The short-term economic fallout from the loss of all those federal dollars could damage Sargent's political existence more than the long-range wisdom of his transportation policy would enhance it.

Governors in other states have felt compelled for years to make the opposite decision. Even in regions where the drawbacks of highway construction had become apparent, politicians were unable to endure the economic consequences of rejecting federal road money. Furthermore, the road building had become institutionalized in the form of the Highway Trust Fund, which since 1956 has collected more than $60 billion in gasoline taxes and turned it into pavement, most notably the 42,500-mile

David C. Martin is a Washington-based journalist who recently completed a fellowship at the Washington Journalism Center.

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Interstate Highway System. The fund had become an economist's perpetual motion machine, defended by the "road gang" of highway lobbyists happy with the never-ending spiral of more highways producing more taxes to build more highways for still more taxes. No state government had dared tinker with this funding mechanism and no coordinated effort had been made to oppose the road gang until Senator Edmund Muskie, accompanied by a leading Republican, first John Sherman Cooper and then, following Cooper's retirement, Howard Baker, raised an amendment in the wake of the Nixon Administration's transportation revenue-sharing proposal of 1971.

The Muskie/Baker amendment would allow states to spend their share of the $800 million of the urban highway funds on buses and rails instead of roads. More important, it would allow a governor like Sargent to cancel a section of already-funded freeway to build a mass transit system in its place.

The Administration backed the Muskie/Baker approach since it offered a way of diverting money to mass transit without increasing overall federal spending, and sent the new Secretary of Transportation, Claude Brinegar, off to lobby for its passage. To back up Brinegar, a little-known oil company executive with no political experience, the President plucked Egil Krogh from his Domestic Council and assigned him as Brinegar's number two man, with instructions that his first priority was to "bust the highway fund." Revelations that Krogh had ordered the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist would later impair his effectiveness as a lobbyist, but at the time Krogh was regarded as a valuable advocate. Finally, Robert Monagan, the Republican leader of the California State Assembly, came in to head Transportation's congressional liaison office. Monagan had demonstrated his commitment to diversion of Highway Trust Fund money to mass transit by repeatedly voting in favor of using part of California's auto fuel taxes for mass transit and could provide the political savvy the Department lacked.

Outside the Administration, pro-amendment forces formed ranks. The Governors' Conference had endorsed the diversion of highway funds, along with the Conference of Mayors, the League of Cities, Common Cause, the United Steel Workers, the United Auto Workers, the Teamsters (part of the budding romance between Frank Fitzsimmons and Richard Nixon), the Institute for Rapid Transit, and a host of environmental groups operating under the umbrella of the Highway Action Coalition.

It was a broad coalition—too broad, perhaps. Most of its members saw diversion merely as one part of enlightened social policy—nice to have but hardly a gut issue. In a pinch, the steel and auto workers would hold themselves back, husbanding their strength for more pressing issues like occupational safety legislation. Common Cause would devote the bulk of its attention to untangling the financial manipulations of the Committee to Re-elect the President. The transit lobby would decide it wanted direct federal operating subsidies more than Muskie/Baker.

For the highway lobby, on the other hand, there were no competing issues, no divided loyalties. Any mistakes were on the side of excess, not caution. It was not simple self-interest that motivated the road builders. Almost invariably, the people who build highways also build subways. Of the first 35 contracts let for construction of Washington, D. C.'s subway system, 32 went to members of the Associated General Contractors, one of the juggernauts of the highway lobby.

The road gang feared that this first diversion of trust fund monies would establish the congressional precedent of using highway money for the construction and purchase of mass transit facilities. It would not be long, they said, before Congress started using the trust fund for operating subsidies to

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failing bus and rail lines. The nation's transit systems ran up a combined deficit of more than $500 million in 1972, and the size of the deficit has been roughly doubling every two years.

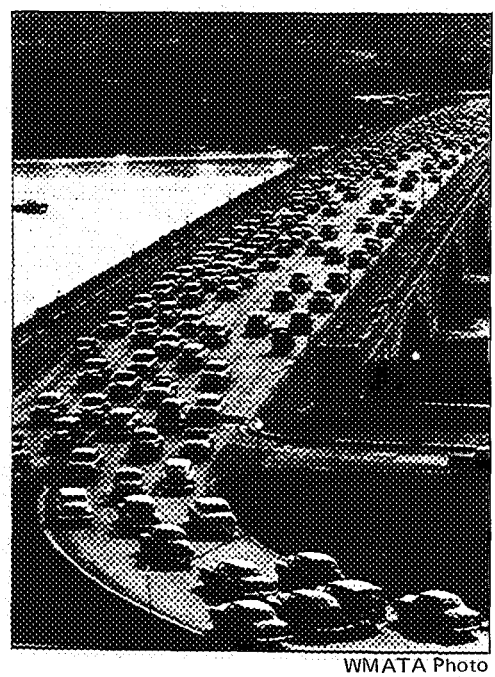
Catching the Road Gang Off Guard

The diversion fight started off in the Senate in March and ended with a victory that looked suspiciously like a defeat when the Muskie/Baker amendment was passed by a vote of only 49 to 44, a come-down from the previous year when a similar amendment had sailed through by a vote of 48 to 26 only to run aground in the House. The difference between the 1972 and 1973 votes was the difference between a road gang caught unawares, fat and lazy after 16 uninterrupted years of bigger and better road bills, and an aroused highway lobby out to assure another 16 years of hegemony.

If the 1972 vote had come as a surprise to the road men, it was a positive embarrassment to Senator Jennings Randolph, chairman of the Public Works Committee. Randolph had once served as treasurer of the American Road Builders and was strongly identified with the highway lobby. Representing a state with such limited mass transit needs as West Virginia hardly inspired him to break stride with his road-building friends of many years' standing.

For Randolph there was more at stake than a mere highway fund. A chairman's prestige depends on the treatment his bills receive when they reach the floor. To lose a bill, either through outright rejection or through amendments which alter its original intent, is to lose face, and that was exactly what Randolph was determined to avoid in 1973.

He began by sitting in on every meeting of his Roads subcommittee (renamed Transportation to avoid any hint of bias) to make sure it reported out a bill to his liking. When the bill reached the floor, Randolph saw to it that Senator Harrison Williams rose to



WMATA Photo

offer the first amendment, which called for the allocation of $3 billion in general tax revenues to mass transit over a three-year period. It was not a controversial measure; Congress had approved identical legislation back in 1970. But, by attaching it to the highway bill, Randolph could argue that mass transit was being cared for and that there was no need to divert money from the trust fund.

While Randolph was working his parliamentary stratagems, other highway proponents were gathering votes in a more direct fashion. A group of Florida highway contractors came to Washington to visit their senator, Edward Gurney, who had voted for diversion in 1972. Gurney was up for reelection in 1974, and it was said on reliable authority that the contractors' pledge of a substantial campaign contribution persuaded him to switch his vote. Hubert Humphrey got so much pressure from his old friend Rep. John Blatnik from Minneapolis, chairman of the House Public Works Committee, that Humphrey voted against Muskie/Baker even though he was one of its co-sponsors.

This was an impressive display by the highway forces, but it was not

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enough. As the Senate debate wore on, it became clear that the opposition had also grown more shrewd and determined. At the core of the highway opponents was the Highway Action Coalition and its director, John Kramer. A 24-year-old dropout from graduate school, Kramer had no lobbying experience but showed considerable savvy in making sure strategic telephone calls were made and pressure applied on all sensitive points.

Georgia's freshman Senator Sam Nunn voted for diversion after calls from Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter (who responded to a plea from Chicago's Richard Daley relayed by the chairman of the Chicago Transit Authority), Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell (calling at Governor Sargent's request), and Secretary Brinegar.

As Muskie/Baker moved toward passage on the Senate floor, Lowell Weicker rose to say he felt sorry for his colleagues in the House, for they would be subjected to the last-ditch efforts of the highway lobby. The House would be voting on an amendment offered by Los Angeles Democrat Glenn Anderson, the thrust of which was precisely the same as Muskie/Baker.

If the Anderson amendment passed, then both houses would have endorsed diversion, and the conferees from the House and Senate would only need to agree on the exact number of dollars to be taken out of the fund. If Anderson's proposal were defeated, the Muskie/Baker amendment was accorded almost no chance of surviving the conference.

Getting Through to Johnny Klu

There was a time when it seemed that the Anderson amendment just might pass. The talk began when Rep. John Kluczynski, chairman of the House Roads (also renamed Transportation) subcommittee, announced he was in favor of diversion. Kluczynski, or "Johnny Klu" as he likes to be called, has long supported the highway lobby—he was fond of saying his district on the South Side of Chicago contained more truck terminals than any other congressional district in the country. His conversion was hailed as a sure sign that the Highway Trust Fund was an idea whose time was up. But Johnny Klu had not really been converted. A failing Chicago transit system had forced him to switch his vote. Mayor Richard Daley, faced with service cutbacks and fare increases, gave Klu his choice: support the Anderson amendment or face something other than token opposition in the next Democratic primary.

The highway lobby found as Klu's successor Rep. Jim Wright of Fort Worth, an intelligent and articulate champion of the trust fund. Wright was the author of a compromise proposal that would allow the states to turn back their urban road funds for an equal amount in general tax money, which could then be spent on mass transit. More important, Wright developed the single most convincing argument against diversion.

The way Wright told it, diversion was just another Administration scheme to save money—making one fund pay for two programs. If the Administration could get money for mass transit out of the trust fund, it would have an excuse to impound some of the general funds appropriated for mass transit. It was just like revenue sharing—the Administration was giving with one hand and taking away with the other. There was probably some justification for Wright's fears although a growing number of judicial rulings have seriously undermined the President's power—but not his determination—to impound.

Wright's presentation before the Rules Committee which would establish the procedures for bringing the highway bill to the floor of the House started off with a masterful description of his compromise proposal. Then, voice rising, he launched into his comparison between diversion and revenue sharing, ending with a booming, "Gentlemen, if we buy that

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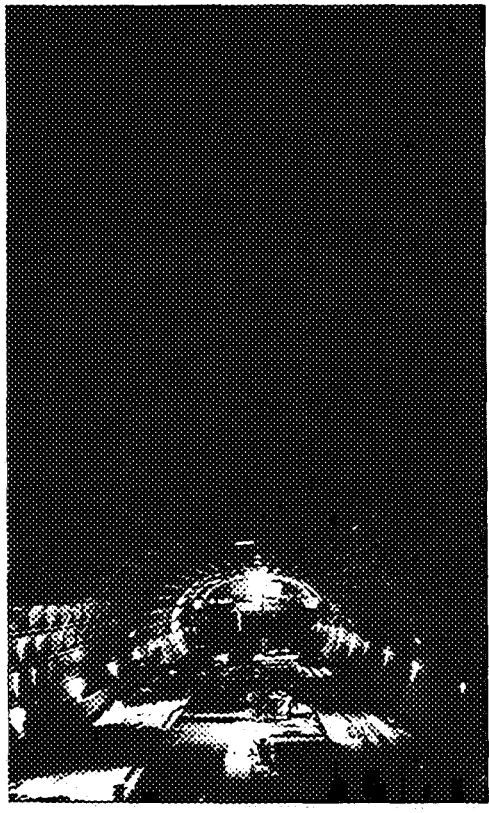
sucker bait again then we are buying a pig in a poke." John Anderson, of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference and a believer in tapping the fund, called it the most impressive presentation ever made.

What the House would do wasn't ever really in doubt. In 1972 a similar amendment hadn't even reached the floor, thanks to a decision by the Rules Committee that mass transit was not germane to a highway bill. This time around the Committee would be hard pressed to argue that the amendment was still not germane to a bill which already contained $3 billion in mass transit money.

Surviving the Rules Committee would be small consolation if the Anderson amendment were defeated on the House floor. This seemed all but inevitable since the leadership of both parties was opposed to the Anderson amendment. The only exceptions were Majority Leader Tip O'Neill of Boston and John Anderson.

House Speaker Carl Albert was officially neutral but personally opposed to diversion. While O'Neill made no secret of his support for diversion, he also had to think of his future relations with the Speaker. If they fought openly on this, O'Neill might pay for it somewhere down the line. Accordingly, the Majority Leader did not speak in favor of the amendment on the floor, and as one Administration lobbyist put it, "Tip just didn't break any arms on this one."

The highway forces had persuasive techniques at their disposal. John Blatnik's Public Works Committee, which controls just about every federal dollar spent on public works, hasn't lost a bill on the House floor since 1956. A congressman who wanted to keep the federal dollars flowing into his district would be well advised to support the Committee, or at least not to oppose it noisily. Much of the credit for this unblemished record has to go to the Committee's chief counsel, Richard Sullivan, who has the ability to write a bill with something in it for everyone and a



WMATA Photo

little extra something for that certain someone. In the 1973 Highway Bill the little extra something was a proposed 10,000 miles of "priority primary" roads and the certain someone was Carl Albert, along with the two new members of the Rules Committee.

The priority primary network was a mini-Interstate highway system, taking existing routes and upgrading them to the multi-lane, divided-highway Interstate standards. The entire 10,000 miles hadn't been mapped out, but there were, said the Committee, a number of likely candidates. There was, for instance, Route 69 in Oklahoma, starting at the Texas border and running northward through Albert's hometown of McAlester and on up toward Kansas, bisecting Oklahoma's second congressional district, which was represented by Clem McSpadden, one of Albert's recent additions to the Rules Committee. Another proposed priority primary route cut a diagonal across the state of

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Louisiana from Shreveport to New Orleans, passing through Alexandria, home of Gillis Long, another newly named member of the Rules Committee.

Ford and Highways Go Hand-in-Hand

The White House had decided not to use its countervailing power to grant or postpone public works projects. The Administration knew that it might be in for some struggles soon when Congress attempted to override the President's vetoes, and it preferred to save its efforts until then. This left the Administration to rely on party discipline to move the diversion amendment through the House. But the most prestigious Republican in the House, Gerald Ford of Michigan, was unalterably opposed to diversion.

Ford appeared to have every reason to go along with the Administration on this one. In Grand Rapids, which makes up the bulk of Ford's district, the city commission had adopted a resolution in support of diversion. Back in 1971 Ford had been linked to a secret campaign fund set up by a lobbyist for the American Trucking Association, and supporting the Anderson amendment would have been a good chance for him to display his independence from the highway lobby. But to Ford the trust fund was a sacred pact between the Congress and the American motorist, and he was not going to stand idly by and watch that fund be poured down the "rathole" of public transportation.

Ford's stand clinched it for the highway lobby. Republican congressmen who might otherwise have automatically followed the Administration now had a rallying point. Ford's influence also counted in the more mundane business of getting votes to the floor—no small matter, since the highway bill was to be the last item considered before the spring recess. Twelve congressmen, for instance, were scheduled to depart at 10 o'clock on the morning of the vote to attend a parliamentary conference in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Ford mentioned to Edward Derwinski, head of the House delegation to the conference, that he thought the members should be present for the vote. The flight was postponed until two in the afternoon (a delay which cost the delegation the better part of its stopover in Barbados), and eight of the 12 voted against the Anderson amendment.

When he offered his condolences to the House, Senator Weicker wasn't talking about little maneuvers like this. What he had in mind was the kind of job the American Road Builders did on the Georgia House delegation. Six days before the vote, between 150 and 200 highway contractors from Georgia flew to Washington for lunch with their representatives. The main speaker was Emory Parrish of the Georgia Department of Transportation, who made a strong anti-diversion pitch. When he had finished, Parrish suggested going around the room to see if there were any questions. First to rise was Rep. Bo Ginn, a member of the Public Works Committee and squarely opposed to the Anderson amendment. Bo didn't have any questions, but he wanted to say right here and now that he planned to vote against the Anderson amendment. The precedent was set, and each congressman rose not to ask questions, but to look all those road builders in the eye and tell them which way he intended to vote.

The only Georgia congressman not present for that little session was Andrew Young of Atlanta, the only black member of the delegation and the only one to vote for the Anderson amendment. One hundred eighty-nine other congressmen also voted aye, but 215 voted nay, and the highway bill was sent to a Senate-House conference.

The assumption was that the trust fund would emerge from the conference unsullied by diversion. Robert Monagan at Transportation had flatly predicted back in February that if the Anderson amendment were defeated in the House, Muskie/Baker would die

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in conference.

What little hope remained for diversion seemed to vanish when word leaked out that Jennings Randolph, as Senate Public Works chairman, was planning to appoint nine members to the panel of Senate conferees. A quick look at the members of the Public Works Committee revealed that any combination of nine senators chosen on the basis of seniority (the way such things usually are done) would result in a 5 to 4 split against Muskie/Baker.

Choosing the conferees is clearly a chairman's prerogative, but in proposing to name nine, Randolph had gone too far, violating a resolution recently adopted by the Senate Democratic caucus which held that conferees must represent the will of the Senate—in this case, Muskie/Baker. It was perhaps the first confrontation between the tradition of seniority and the Senate's recent, halting efforts at reform.

Armed with this resolution, John Kramer of the Highway Action Coalition went to Senator Edward Kennedy, who, along with Weicker, had earlier sponsored a much tougher diversion amendment which the Senate had rejected. Kennedy and Muskie went to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and argued that the Democrats could not abandon their reform resolutions the very first time they were put to a test. Mansfield agreed, and Randolph was quietly informed he should appoint seven conferees instead, divided 4 to 3 in favor of Muskie/Baker.

This unheralded triumph left chances for diversion in only a slightly less precarious position than before. If only one senator changed his mind, the Senate contingent would yield to the House conferees, who were a firm 7 to 2 against diversion. And a closer look at the Senate conferees inspired little confidence. Muskie, it was said, was still depressed by his presidential debacle and giving less than full attention to his Senate duties. Baker had taken an editorial lambasting in Tennessee papers after the Senate passed his amendment and did not seem eager to emerge as the sole champion of diversion.

The other two backers of Muskie/Baker were firm—Robert Stafford of Vermont, because he had been the subject of much internal ridicule after switching his vote on diversion once before in committee, and James Buckley of New York, because of the desperate mass transit needs of New York City. The three senators opposed to diversion were considered equally firm—Randolph, Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, chairman of the Transportation subcommittee which had rejected the Muskie/Baker approach, and Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, who wouldn't be attending the actual conference but had given Randolph his proxy.

The conference began on May 9 and quickly went into a deadlock that lasted for 10 weeks. The Senate conferees simply refused to cave in. Some ascribed the sudden display of senatorial backbone to the Watergate hearings. Muskie seemed rejuvenated by public revelations of how the White House had used dirty tricks to help deprive him of the Democratic nomination. Baker, starring in the televised hearings, could stop thinking in terms of Tennessee and start maneuvering for a national constituency. (At one point during the Watergate hearings, Baker announced to the nation that he had to leave to attend a highway conference which until that moment had been a closely guarded secret.) As a bonus, it turned out that Lloyd Bentsen, who was chairman of the Senate conferees, was a strict constructionist when it came to Democratic caucus resolutions and never wavered in his support of Muskie/Baker.

Proposals were offered and rejected. The House conferees would agree to divert some money out of the fund for buses but not for rails. The Senate demanded rails or nothing.

It was not until the secret conference meeting advertised by Baker that a breakthrough came. Senators Baker

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and Muskie met with Reps. Wright and Harsha and came away with an understanding that some money for rails would simply have to come out of the fund before any sort of compromise could be reached.

At the next session, the House conferees offered to extend the bill into a fourth year, making Muskie/Baker operative in that last year. The Senate was less than impressed with the offer. The trust fund was set to expire in 1977 anyway.

The very next day, however, the House came back with an offer to let Muskie/Baker take effect in the third year on the condition that it would not apply to the "Interstate transfer" provision, which allows a state to cancel an unwanted section of city highway and still retain the money to spend on a substitute freeway at a later date. The conferees, after 29 sessions, had reached agreement.

In one sense it was the perfect compromise. The House would prevail during the first year of the three-year bill. The Senate would get its way in the last. In between there would be a year of transition in which $200 million in trust fund money could be spent on buses but not rails.

But in another sense, the trust fund was an issue which allowed no compromise. Either the money was all devoted to roads or it wasn't. For the first time the fund had been tapped—$200 million for buses in fiscal year 1975, $800 million for buses and trains in fiscal 1976. The Senate had backed off the Interstate transfer provision, accepting the House plan whereby a state would return trust funds earmarked for a canceled section of urban freeway and receive an equal amount of general funds for mass transit. But the growing number of court rulings ordering the Administration to release various types of impounded funds made that general revenue money look like almost as sure a bet as the trust fund. Governor Sargent for one said he was satisfied that he would be able to get his $1 billion back.

There was little doubt the highway bill would now pass both houses with ease. The vote in the Senate was 91 to 5 and the bill was sent to the House for final congressional approval. But suddenly the Office of Management and Budget announced that it was unhappy with the levels of funding in the $20-billion bill. With just two days remaining before the start of the August recess, the White House refused to offer assurances the President would not kill the bill with a pocket veto while Congress was adjourned for the summer.

Besides reducing all that work to dust (Wright calculated the total to be nearly 3,500 legislative man-days), a pocket veto would be especially galling since the conferees had made major efforts to bring the bill more in line with the Administration's budget.

In the middle of a debate over the Alaskan pipeline, Wright rose to announce that he would not bring the highway bill to the floor unless the Administration promised there would be no pocket veto. Wright said he would hold it back until Congress returned after Labor Day at which time he was sure there would be enough votes to override a veto. Gerald Ford got on the phone to the White House and assured them Wright was not bluffing about being able to override, and within an hour of Wright's speech, Secretary Brinegar was promising that the President would sign the bill. On the last day of the summer session the bill came to the floor, and after the usual amount of self-congratulation, it was passed 382 to 34.

Muskie said it was a "modest beginning." It would be a long time before any subway systems were built with the money contained in the 1973 Federal Highway Bill, but the mere fact that a highway bill contained money for mass transit would, as John Kramer, now Illinois' Assistant Secretary for Transportation, put it, "permanently change the environment in which transportation decisions are made." ■

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The $12 Billion Misunderstanding: Veterans and the VA

by Paul Starr

To those unfamiliar with the Veterans Administration, the size and range of its programs come as a surprise. The VA is not a cabinet-level department, and it's assumed to be relatively small, although its budget of $12.1 billion places it third among federal agencies in expenditures, and in number of employees it ranks second only to the Pentagon. Other agencies have specific functional objectives and circumscribed activities, but the VA is unusual because its programs are so diverse. The VA takes an active role in providing education, on-the-job training, vocational rehabilitation, home loan guarantees, disability compensation, income maintenance, health care, aid to widows and dependents, life insurance, old-age care, even management of estates and burial benefits. Veterans' organizations would deny it, but the fact remains that the VA is the most elaborate form the welfare state has achieved in the United States. It ought to follow that the Veterans Administration is well equipped to cope with the obstacles veterans face when they come home, but on inspection, the VA budget puts spending in this area on a low priority. Instead, it favors nonservice-related needs developed by veterans long after their years in uniform, and this is a priority that seems to defy logic. Evidently, "How should we be spending all this money?" is a question that hasn't been raised for a long time.

A consensus among veterans that much more money should go to the recently discharged military personnel has had no effect on national policy,

Paul Starr directed a study on veterans' affairs for Ralph Nader. This article is adapted from his book, The Discarded Army, *to be published in January by Charterhouse.*

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and this is the central paradox of the VA. Back in 1954, a Roper poll surveyed 2,900 veterans, asking them what programs for veterans they favored. Virtually all thought that compensation for service-connected disabilities deserved the highest priority. The poll found that 86 per cent believed medical care for service-connected disabilities was justified, and 66 per cent favored schooling at government expense. But only 22 per cent believed that veterans ought to receive nonservice-connected medical care and just 13 per cent supported nonservice-connected pensions. A Harris poll of Vietnam veterans taken in 1971 indicates that these priorities have hardly changed at all. The majority view was still that aid should be distributed to men just after discharge, when they are getting resettled, and among those veterans who need it the most.

Alas, that is not the way veterans programs operate. Half the VA budget is dispensed under the pressure of a well organized veterans' lobby to nonservice-connected programs that serve men whose lives are remote from military service. The lobby has insisted that benefits must be available equally across the board and there are no special provisions for combat veterans—men who went into service with the least education, who were most exposed to death, who were least likely to acquire skills useful in civilian life, and, finally, men who were most likely to come home with injuries or psychological problems. Such is the achievement of a powerful lobby, a compliant Congress, and a supine executive agency.

The VA budget tells the story. The three largest appropriation items for fiscal year 1974 are disability compensation and nonservice-connected pensions,* $6.51 billion; medical programs, $2.76 billion; and readjustment benefits, primarily GI Bill aid for education and vocational training, $2.53 billion. These three items account for 97 per cent of the VA budget, while general operating expenses and construction funds soak up the rest. How much goes for nonservice-connected benefits? In the area of medical care, 85 per cent of hospital discharges have been for nonservice-connected conditions. Counting that proportion of the medical budget as nonservice-connected ($2.35 billion) and adding to that the cost of nonservice-connected pensions ($2.65 billion), one accounts for over 40 per cent of the VA budget. If we add the proportion of general operating expenses, construction funds, and miscellaneous programs also attributable to nonservice-connected claims, the amount would be more nearly 50 per cent of VA appropriations.

We can determine the proportion of the budget that goes to Vietnam veterans by making similarly rough estimates. The last period for which all the necessary breakdowns are available was fiscal year 1972. That year, Vietnam-era vets and their dependents (and survivors) received $0.56 billion out of a total of $6.25 billion that was paid out in compensation and pensions. Vietnam-era veterans accounted for 14.8 per cent of VA hospital discharges during 1972, and so the cost of care they received can be put at $0.35 billion out of a total of $2.39-billion budget. As for readjustment benefits, total benefits amounted to $1.89 billion, nearly all of it for education and vocational training benefits under the GI Bill. Since 80 per cent of GI Bill funds were earmarked for Vietnam-era vets, they received about $1.51 billion in

*In the special terminology of the VA, "compensation" refers to payments made to veterans and their families for disabilities and deaths related to military service. "Pensions," on the other hand, refer to payments for disabilities unrelated to military service. All veterans over 65 are considered "permanently and totally disabled" because of their age and consequently are eligible for pensions subject to income limitations. Also included in the appropriation for compensation and pensions are the costs of several other minor VA programs such as burial benefits.

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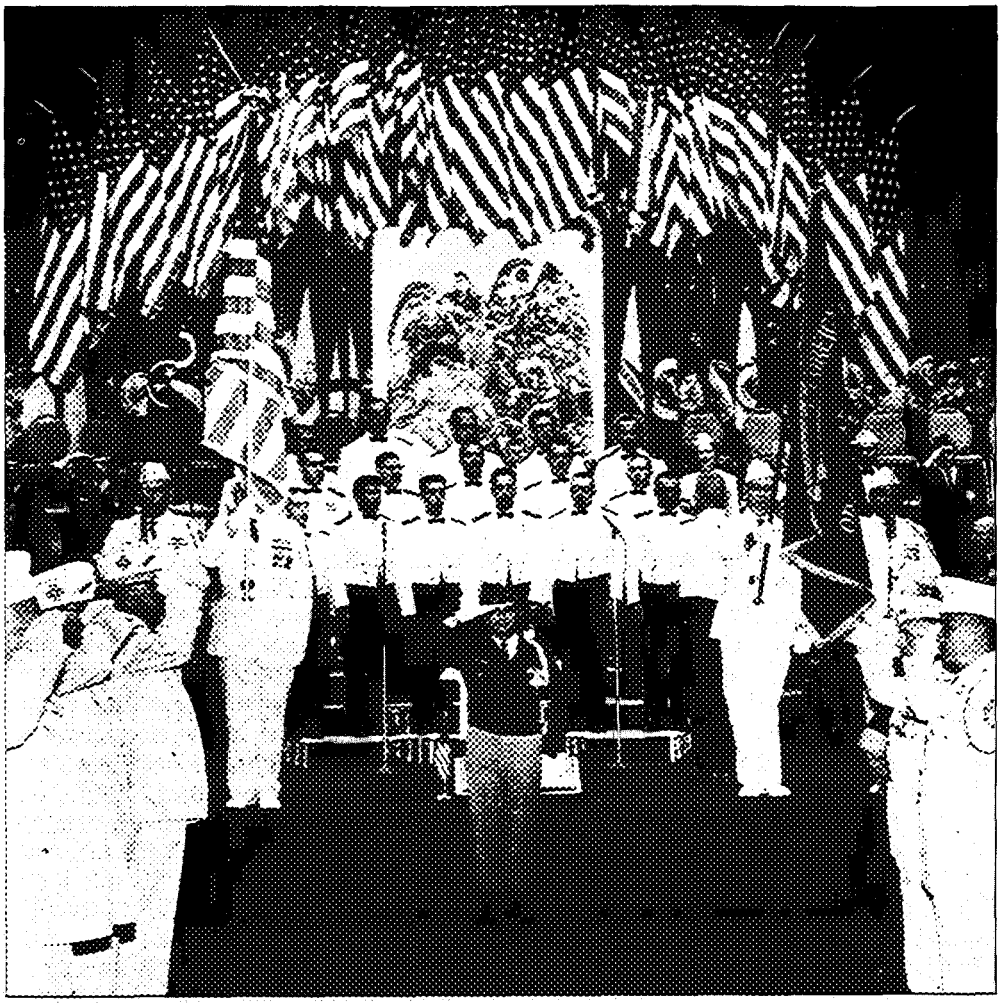
readjustment benefits. In all, Vietnam-era vets got about $2.42 billion in readjustment benefits out of $10.5 billion—23 per cent of major expenditures. Only about half the Vietnam-era vets served in Southeast Asia, and it seems likely that war veterans were actually getting only 12 to 15 per cent of the VA budget.

On the surface, this distinction seems just, because in 1972 Vietnam-era vets were getting a share of the VA budget that was just about proportionate to their numbers (21 per cent of all U. S. vets), but not if the consensus indicated by the Roper poll is any standard of justice. If this, and other sources, are standards, then veterans programs fail to meet the most immediate needs—those of young veterans.

Programs for nonservice-connected needs became lodged in the VA deep in its past, when veterans' organizations began to be dominated by older veterans, who ever since have used the VA as a general social welfare agency. On the basis of past U. S. experience, it has been estimated that veterans' pensions ultimately cost two to three times as much as the wars the veterans fought, and, owing to provisions for dependents and survivors, payments tend to continue long after the last veteran has died. The government stopped paying benefits for the Revolutionary War only in 1911, for the War of 1812 in 1946, and for the Mexican War in 1963. It is still paying for the Civil War, the Indian wars,



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incidents on the Mexican border, the Boxer Rebellion, the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and the intervention in Russia in the 1920s, an affair which may have left its traces on the VA alone and nowhere else in the American memory. In no case, it seems, have veterans' pensions lasted less than 133 years after a war.

The annual cost of nonservice-connected benefits today is nowhere near what it will be in the future. Pensions have historically been the largest expense in the VA's budget, and benefits reach their peak 40 to 70 years after the war ends. When the millions of World War II veterans begin passing 65 and become eligible for pensions, the budget will skyrocket. Even if the rates of payment remain the same, which is rather unlikely, by 1990 the government will be shelling out somewhere near $13 billion annually in veterans' pensions alone, more than the VA's entire budget today. This is not to mention military retirement pay, which will easily push the total over $20 billion a year.

Professor James L. Clayton of the University of Utah estimates that pensions for Vietnam will peak about the year 2020 and that the total cost of Vietnam veterans' pensions will be about $220 billion (a low estimate, since benefit levels will undoubtedly rise). In view of the increasing life expectancy, we can probably count on paying out veterans' pensions for the Vietnam war well into the 22nd century—if we last that long.

The VA's pension-disbursing and welfare functions serve an important military role. They help promote recruitment for the armed forces, in that potential enlistees are promised not only "adventure" abroad, but also security when they come home. Benefits also help enforce discipline within the army—a less than honorable discharge can mean the loss of veterans' benefits. Perhaps most important, an extensive system of veterans' services fosters a continued identification with the armed forces among a large segment of the population, thus strengthening the military's domestic political position.

As a system of social welfare programs, veterans' services have two different and complex roles. While in all societies veterans are officially the subject of nothing but panegyrics, they are also regarded with a certain unspoken apprehension. Every society exploits its soldiers in the sense that it imposes risks that can never be compensated. It fears the dread possibility that those who fought abroad will strike back in fury on their return home, feeling cheated and bitter at the depth of their sacrifice, the meagerness of their rewards, and the seeming ingratitude of their countrymen. History is replete with riots and rebellions by returning soldiers. Veterans' benefits, consequently, function not only to provide services to a group thought especially deserving, but also to mollify men regarded as having a great potential for civil disruption. Ultimately, not just a nation's enemies but also its heroes must be pacified. In this respect, the veterans' programs differ very little from social welfare programs, which have historically been a means both of providing assistance and of maintaining order.

A number of other functions should also be noted. As the benefits help veterans readjust to civilian life, they also help the economy to adjust to them. After World War II, educational benefits kept millions of veterans off the labor market and helped avoid mass unemployment. Partly because the Vietnam war was not followed by the kind of sudden demobilization that took place after World War II, there has developed no sense of urgency about the economic impact of the war's termination, and veterans' benefits have not been as handsome.

Veterans' benefits have also channeled federal funds to specific areas of the economy. The GI Bill helped finance the expansion of American universities in the post-World War II

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era. Similarly, guarantees for home loans encouraged new construction. In 1950 veterans' programs represented 20.4 per cent of the federal budget—considerable fuel for the economy. In 1972, primarily due to growing federal spending in other areas, veterans' programs represented only 4.7 per cent of the budget. Thus, as other programs have burgeoned, the relative importance of veterans' benefits to the private sector has correspondingly diminished. Universities now seek aid for research programs. The housing industry is more concerned about cementing relations with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. So, groups which once lobbied for more substantial readjustment programs for veterans are now off working for other agencies, and, consequently, Vietnam-era veterans have lost some potential special interest allies.

Special interests have not totally abandoned the VA, though. The airlines have made sure that the agency continues to provide benefits for commercial flight training, since most of their pilots come from the military and receive additional training under the GI Bill. Career and correspondence schools also have a large interest in securing generous education benefits for vets—and loose regulatory controls by the VA—since a large proportion of their clients enroll with GI Bill money.

Welfare Without Tears

Veterans' benefits have social and psychological uses apart from their material ones. This can be seen most clearly where ordinary government welfare programs, unrelated to military service, are nevertheless defined as veterans' benefits. As already noted, the overwhelming majority of patients who receive care in VA hospitals are there for nonservice-connected medical problems. Even more striking is the separate program for income maintenance for veterans, over and

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above social security. Receiving such assistance *as veterans* has an enormous impact on the way they are treated and see themselves. Unlike a welfare check, a veteran's pension carries no stigma. There are no demeaning investigations into the recipient's personal life, no sense that he is leeching off the public. After two consecutive years as a pensioner, a veteran over 72 doesn't even have to fill out an income questionnaire. Thus, it is not surprising that veterans vehemently resist attempts to rationalize the nation's social security and welfare system by integrating veterans' pensions with other income maintenance programs. They have an interest not just in the amount of benefits, but in the way the programs are defined.

Returning Vietnam soldiers have sacrificed health and opportunity in many cases and the legitimacy of their immediate claims on our society is unquestionable. Benefits which are not related, however, to sacrifices made in war, but which confer on veterans a separate status for life are another matter entirely. Forty years ago, Franklin Roosevelt went before a convention of the American Legion and declared that "no person, because he wore a uniform, must thereafter be placed in a special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens." The principle has too often been forgotten in the intervening years. Not only are permanent benefits dubious as social policy, but there is a real question whether they have not interfered with the programs for returning servicemen that should be the legitimate and preeminent concern of the Veterans Administration.

Veterans' organizations have an even larger stake than individual pensioners in the definition of federal programs. It is a common oversimplification to say that the structure of private interests determines the structure of government programs. The process actually works both ways—the structure of government projects also influences the kinds of private interests that coalesce. If a government program is designed along certain lines, then private organizations will define themselves along the same lines, simply because that is the most effective way for the clients of that agency to exercise influence. This is nowhere more true than in the area of veterans' programs. On leaving the army, the average soldier does not join a veterans' association. It is primarily when he wants something from the VA and has trouble getting it that he puts on his veteran's hat and turns to a veterans' organization for help. If federal projects were defined along other lines, he would go to some other lobby for assistance. Thus, by providing assistance separately to veterans, the government encourages them to organize as a separate interest group.

This kind of private mimicry of government structure obviously sets enormous obstacles in the path of reform. Any proposal to merge aid to veterans with other federal activities runs up not only against the inertia of government but against the interests of large nongovernmental organizations whose power is premised on the existing structure. Even where separate veterans' programs provide inadequate services and the interests of individual veterans would be better served by wider social programs, the veterans' organizations may be expected to fight to preserve their separate status and administrative structure.

Currently, all but a few veterans' services are located in the Veterans Administration. The major exceptions are benefits for retired officers, which are administered by the Defense Department and now amount to $5 billion annually, and employment services, which are under the Department of Labor. The veterans' lobby has successfully resisted the proliferation of veterans' programs outside the VA, even at the risk of eliminating some of them entirely. In 1968, for example, the Office of Education initiated a pilot program called Veterans in Public Service (VIPS) that enabled a small

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number of Vietnam veterans to supplement their GI Bill education allowance with earnings from part-time work as teachers' aides in public schools. When the project ended in August, 1970, HEW asked Congress to renew and to extend the program into the health fields. The proposal died when the veterans' lobby unanimously objected to VIPs as "diluting the power of the Veterans Administration."

Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares

Despite the size and scope of the VA's programs and the enormous changes in the role of the federal government since their inception, the agency has been the object of remarkably little critical analysis. There have been thousands of individual complaints about its services, of course, but social scientists and policy-makers have rarely given veterans' programs sustained attention. Indeed, the VA has been an administrator's dream: high in budget, low in visibility. It is hard to think of any other unit of government—or any private organization—with an annual budget as large as $12 billion that is as inconspicuous as the Veterans Administration. Over the years, the VA has operated like a large, silent, gray machine, attended by political appointees who have neither the interest nor the vulnerability to criticism that would induce them to consider whether the agency's role and structure should be overhauled.

This low visibility is largely a product of routinization. Veterans' programs have retained roughly the form they took at the end of World War II. With the Vietnam war, the government merely reactivated the readjustment benefits that had lapsed by the early sixties.

The insulation of all veterans' institutions from outside control is a final, significant factor in the low visibility of the VA. This insulation is established in part by law: No appeals on rulings by the VA, except where constitutional issues are involved, may be brought into federal courts. All matters are handled within a VA appeals system, the ultimate arbiter being the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, the head of the VA. This arrangement, which its advocates claim protects the veteran, also conveniently protects the agency from outside intervention. The system is further strengthened by regulations that effectively prevent all but representatives of old-line veterans' organizations from serving as counsel at VA hearings. The regulations limit to $10 the fee any professional lawyer can receive for a case before the VA, and there are simply not many lawyers willing to work at that rate. The combination of no judicial review, plus no legal counsel at VA hearings, effectively seals off the agency's proceedings.

Veterans' affairs are run largely by an interlocking network made up of the leading veterans' organizations, the Veterans Administration and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. There is a continual exchange of personnel among these three centers of influence. Donald Johnson, currently the Administrator of the Veterans Administration, was formerly National Commander of the American Legion. Herbert Rainwater, now the director of the Veterans' Employment Service in the Department of Labor, was National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Richard Roudebush has managed to make all three stops. He served as a National Commander of the VFW, and when elected to the House, he joined the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. When he left the House in 1971, after losing a race for the Senate, he became a special counselor to Johnson.

This sort of internal cohesiveness no doubt fosters the best of relations among those concerned with setting policy. But it also raises questions about the potential for feedback and adaptation. Perhaps it is time someone outside the family had a look at veterans' benefits. ■

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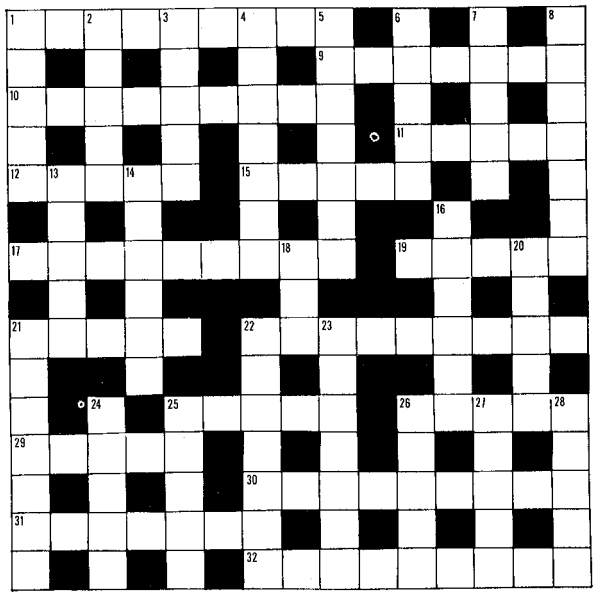
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. True scope of Cox's assignment. (9)
9. Street crime by borer. (7)
10. His job as General is to roil stoic Court. (9)
11. Sticker going North. (5)
12. Went off path where deer are. (5)
15. Chain and gashouse. (5)
17. Gets pear asset away from group. (9)
19. Too senior to spend time on perch. (5)
21. Turn pale in crash environment. (5)
22. Too much partying should be pill to CIA. (9)
25. Grand jury looks into new Attorney General. (5)
26. Really has me upset. (5)
29. To err is to trip on step. (5)
30. Reminds others to do things, i.e., ex-TV cue. (9)
31. Ice ruse confuses Navy ship. (7)
32. Accepted objection stuns aide at White House. (9)

DOWN

1. Mob rule poses law and order question. (5)
2. Boat to sail down the Loire? (5)
3. One Spanish hero worth many, i.e., 650 Romans. (2, 3)
4. Get all worried about thug tip. (2-5)
5. Get lots of assistance from darners. (7)
6. Beast is a great help in criminal endeavor. (5)
7. Very bad actor in lifelong role. (5)
9. Olga Korbut stang my team badly. (7)
13. Wild leers follow Virginia. (5)
14. The whole lot gets away, save Ed. (6)
16. Clean up questionable popular jokes? (6)
18. Very local pride in San Diego. (3)
20. Activity—not, i.e., impasse. (5)
21. Camera eye takes in two continents. (7)
22. Boatmen who kick? (7)
23. Advocates sly ware in Washington. (7)
24. Question about Susan? (5)
25. Is and are come up. (5)
26. Little bear in South America breathes underwater. (5)
27. Eastern native in quasi--ancient society. (5)
28. Change upsets me near South End. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 44.

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political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in November.

An Age of Mediocrity. C. L. Sulzberger. Macmillan, $12.95.

The Boys on the Bus. Timothy Crouse. Random House, $7.95. Delightful and perceptive account of the press and its coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign.

The Bureaucratization of the World. Henry Jacoby. Univ. of California, $12.95. An intelligent treatment of the basic problem of our time. It suffers, however, from an academic tone and a severe shortage of flesh-and-blood examples.

Dateline Chicago: A Veteran Newsman Recalls Its Heyday. William T. Moore. Taplinger, $7.95.

The Devil and John Foster Dulles: The Diplomacy of the Eisenhower Era. Townsend Hoopes. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $15. How the Cold War was frozen hard by Eisenhower's foreign minister, absorbingly told by the author of *The Limits of Intervention*.

The Dollar Barons. Christopher Elias. Macmillan , $8.95.

The Gospel According to Harvard Business School. Peter Cohen. Doubleday, $10.

Horizons of War: The Next Decade. Roger A. Beaumont, ed. Univ. of Kentucky, $11.

The Imperial Presidency. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Houghton Mifflin, $10.

Maverick Inventor: My Turbulent Years at CBS. Peter C. Goldmark with Lee Edson. Saturday Review, $7.95.

More Equality. Herbert Gans. Pantheon, $7.95.

Multinational Companies and the Third World. Louis Turner. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $7.95.

Plowshares Into Swords: Managing the American Defense Establishment. J. A. Stockfisch. Mason & Lipscomb, $10. A fine understanding of the bureaucratic frame of mind turns this study of the Defense Depart-

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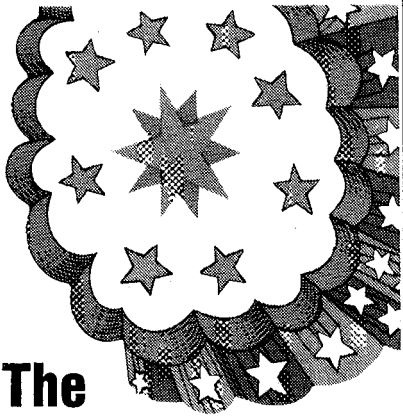

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The Politics of Massive Resistance. Francis M. Wilhoit. Braziller, $8.95. An important and lucid analysis of the anti-integration movement in the South during the 1950s and its ultimate failure.

Political Opinion Polls. F. Terr & J. D. Spence. Hillary House, $10/$6.75.

Promises of Power: A Political Autobiography. Carl B. Stokes. Simon & Schuster, $7.95. Politics is no box of Crackerjacks according to the first black mayor in the U.S. This is an earnest account by the former mayor of Cleveland of the fortunate circumstances (a friendship with Cyrus Eaton, for one) that led up to the tribulations of his short career in power. An even mix of self-absolution and inside dope.

Pileup on Death Row. Burton H. Wolfe. Doubleday, $8.95.

The Revolt of the Cockroach People. Oscar Zeta Acosta. Straight Arrow, $7.95.

Riding High: America in the Cold War. Carl Solberg. Mason & Lipscomb, $12.95. In what amounts to a readable source book for the Cold War era, Solberg packs in all the familiar history, but he rarely takes the time to analyze it and find new conclusions, and that's what this material needs. He never really confronts his stated purpose—"This book is about the unintended consequences of the Cold War"—because his book ends at the start of the decade when all the consequences tumbled out. Nevertheless, Solberg canters swiftly through a whole range of recent history and rarely slows down enough to get dull.

The Silent Sell-Out. Arthur Fletcher. Third Press, $7.95.

The Stalled Society. Michael Crozier. Viking, $6.95.

Superpower: A Portrait of America in the '70s. Robert Hargreaves. St. Martin's, $10.

Surviving the City. John Gabree. Ballantine, $1.95.

They Wouldn't Let Us Die: 26 Prisoners of War Tell Their Story. Stephen A. Rowan. Jonathan David, $8.95.

Us and Them: How the Press Covered the 1972 Election. James M. Perry. Clarkson Potter, $7.95.

Voices of a Black Nation: Political Journalism in the Harlem Renaissance. Theodore G. Vincent, ed. Ramparts, $3.45.

Watergate: Crime in the Suites. Michael Myerson. International Publishers, $1.95.

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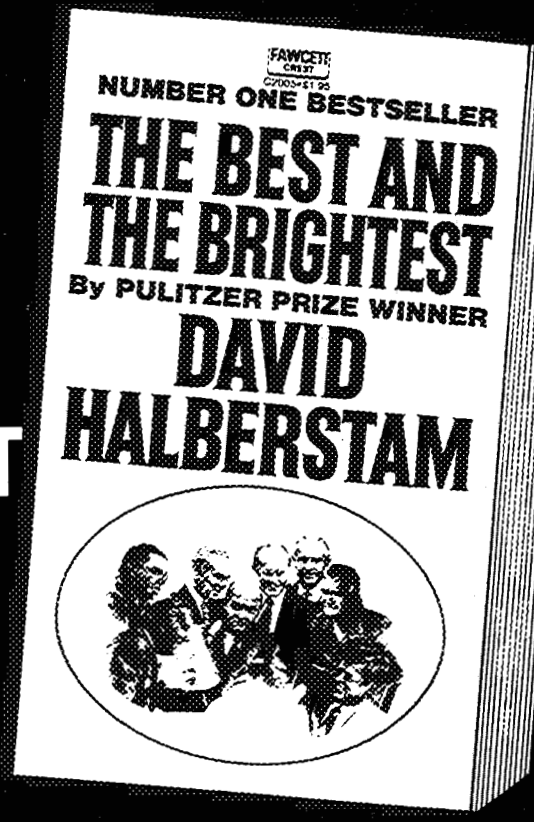

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